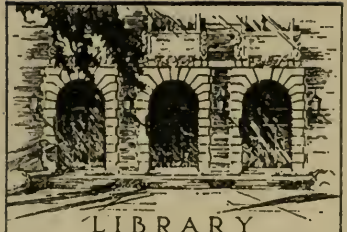

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MORDAUNT HALL;

OR,

A SEPTEMBER NIGHT.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"TWO OLD MEN'S TALES," "EMILIA WYNDHAM,"
"ANGELA," &c.

"The self-remembering soul sweetly recovers
Her kindred with the stars; nor basely hovers
Below — but meditates th' immortal way
Home to the source of light, and intellectual day."

CRASHAW.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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MORDAUNT HALL.

CHAPTER I.

"By that the welked Phœbus 'gan avail
His weary wain; and now the frosty night
Her mantle black through heaven 'gan overhail;
Which seen, the pensive boy half in despight
Arose." SPENCER; *Eglogues.*

VISIONS — sweet, confused dreams — lovely visions—all conjured up by that one kind, innocent smile—haunted his pillow that night. He long lay tossing from side to side in a restless half slumber, excited to a state approaching to delirium; yet his were sensations exquisite as they were intoxicating. He was too young to build castles yet; the idea of founding what would indeed have been the wildest and most

extravagant of these aerial edifices never entered his head. He who had so often been lifted to ecstasy with the sense of beauty as he had seen it in the world of nature around him, was only the more alive to the charms of a being more beautiful than all most beautiful — more lovely than all things lovely — more sweet than all most sweet.

When the poet calls upon all creation to furnish comparisons with his mistress, and finds no opening rose so lovely, no lily so purely fair, no star of heaven so bright, he does but what all feel disposed to do, when the face of spiritual beauty, as beaming upon the human face, is disclosed to them.

His sense, as poor Othello says, "ached at it."

He knew not how to express even to himself what he thought and felt; there were no words sweet enough, precious enough, for her service.

And yet he did sit down—that ardent, passionate boy!—and pen such lines as, had they been preserved and I could have given them to you, would have made you feel truly, that the fine

thing—the rare thing—which constitutes a great poet was abiding within his bosom.

He tore up the vehement, fiery lines as soon as they were written. He was startled at the description of his own feelings. It was as if he had summoned up a spectre—"and Saul fled from before it."

A sense of his own unparalleled audacity shamed him. A sort of instinctive, prophetic, but obscure, intuition of the excessive force of his own feelings, of the violent passions that lay within him, of the extravagance of love, the intensity of pain, the wild daring of which he was capable,—terrified him.

He seemed to look into his own heart as into a dark seething ocean, full of bubbling and contending eddies, but of which the direction was as yet incomprehensible. His goodness—his piety to God—his gratitude to Calantha—his affection to Mr. Prior—his aspirations after learning—where, where, where, were they all gone?

He felt in the distraction of that moment as if he did not care what became of himself—of

them — of anything — might he but have one more such smile from Celia — one more such smile!

He was so hurried, so feverish — looked so ill and haggard, when he came down to breakfast the next morning, that every body observed it.

"What is the matter with you, Gideon?" said Mrs. Mordaunt, kindly. "Come here, boy, let me feel your pulse; you want some blue pill."

The anti-climax to his enraptured feelings was too mortifying.

He made quite a rude answer.

Every body seemed astonished.

Miss Chandos looked up with an expression of surprise and disapprobation in her face, which cut him to the heart; and it was all he could do to help bursting into tears before them all. As he returned to his chair, Mr. Mordaunt said loud enough for every body to hear,—

"Well, Miss Calantha, I think you have perfectly succeeded in your plan of education." Then turning to Gideon, "The next time Mrs. Mordaunt condescends to take so kind an interest in

you, I would have you to know, sir, that I expect her to be treated with civility, at least."

There was after this speech a dead, dreadful silence. It seemed as if there was a pause only that he might feel in all its undiminished force the exquisite torture of that moment.

Revolt, amounting to rage, was in his breast; while the blushes of burning shame covered his face.

There he was pilloried, exposed, lashed in the tenderest part — the eyes of every body fixed upon him, and all filled with disapprobation, anger, and, worse than all, disdain; indifference and disdain — astonishment at his audacity and disdainful indifference for his sufferings. He hated them all!

But he did not look up, or he would have seen the soft eyes of Calantha bent upon him with the tenderest sympathy, and the expression in Miss Chandos's face softened from censure into the kindest pity,—more than pity, for the tears were in her eyes, as she looked first at him and then at her father, as if entreating him to interfere in his behalf. Her mother, I should have said, was not in the room.

Mr. Chandos, though evidently of Mr. Mordaunt's opinion that the boy deserved, and wanted, a reproof—wanted, as the phrase is, "to be taken down," could not resist those pleading eyes; he said,—

"If I were Gideon, I would not sit there writhing under the sense of conduct, which must have grieved all his friends; but I would make an effort to subdue false shame, and would go, like a gentleman, and beg Mrs. Mordaunt's pardon for having been surprised into a rudeness to her."

He loved Mr. Chandos from that time forwards.

And, to the surprise of every one, the sulky, rebellious, and shy boy rose at once from his chair, went up to Mrs. Mordaunt, and made her as handsome an apology as the most accomplished gentleman could have done. Such was his power over himself when properly excited to action.

He ventured just to glance at Miss Chandos as he returned to his seat, and a sweet, approving smile met him,—the surprise of approbation

which had succeeded to the surprise of disapprobation.

There was one more smile, then, to be registered in his heart's treasury. The effect was magical, but of that magic which may be called divine.

"He looked upon her and was calmed and cheered."

The storm of new feelings with which he had been overwhelmed subsided, and was succeeded by the most earnest, fervent desire to win the approbation which he saw was to be won.

The belief that she did, indeed, take so much heed of him as to be moved to censure or approbation by his conduct—that what he did, how he conducted himself, was not totally indifferent to her—raised him in his own esteem, and acted, as in so generous a character it was sure to do, as the most powerful stimulant to the attainment of every species of excellence.

It was this excessive sensibility which rendered him so interesting.

This sweet girl, with a heart overflowing with kindness, could not help taking the most lively interest in the feelings of one who evidently felt

so acutely, so intensely, and yet had something so nobly spirited and animated in his countenance when not under the influence of these intensely painful sensations. She was never weary of watching a character so exquisitely sensitive, and yet which possessed so much vigour and energy, and, as she soon learned, so much intellectual strength and ability.

But she never thought of falling in love with him! Such a possibility never entered into her head. Her imagination never once glanced at a thing which would have appeared to her the most outrageous defiance of the laws of propriety.

So she gave herself up to all the kind benevolence of her nature without disguise, for she had nothing to conceal, and, so far was she from even dreaming of such matters, not the slightest approach to a suspicion that things might be different with him.

As the nervous terrors which sometimes beset us at our half-dreaming, half-waking hours—before we have raised our head from the pillow and are thoroughly under the influence of the cheerful light of day, which reduces things to their just

proportions—as such terrors vanish when the window is thrown open, and, standing there gazing upon the cheerful morning scene, we wonder where all our vain fears are gone. So it was with Mr. Chandos.

The perfect serenity of his daughter's countenance, the ease of her manner, the undisguised interest she expressed in the well-being and future prospects of Gideon, the deep, unfeigned pity she expressed for his fate, reassured the father's heart. He believed that this pity, this interest, was not that which springs from or is akin to love—that it took rise from compassion; and from that compassion which, after all, marks a certain assumed superiority to the object of it; for though Celia treated Gideon with the sweetest cordiality, free from the slightest touch of that arrogant condescension which is almost insulting in its demonstration, her father clearly saw that she *did* look upon him as we look upon those not exactly in our own sphere;—and he was satisfied.

He flattered himself also, that his daughter was more inclined to adopt his own views of the sub-

ject than those of her mother, and to study how best to secure Gideon's real happiness rather than his momentary gratification by maintaining him in a false position.

The two young people were necessarily much together.

It was now mid-winter, and a clear but intense frost had set in. The earth was hard as iron and encrusted with the snow; the rime hung upon every branch and feathered the grass with its lovely crystals; the ponds were frozen over. There was skating going on upon a large mere at no great distance from the house; and there Lucilla, always ready for every plan of amusement, insisted upon going to join the skaters, and see what was going on. She ordered Gideon to bring his skates and the servants to carry down small chairs, that she and Celia might be pushed about upon the ice by the skaters, and share, in this secondary manner, the delights of an exercise which she had always longed to enjoy, but which humour neither her father nor her husband would ever allow her to indulge.

It was a beautiful morning for that time of the

year. The sky blue and clear, the sun bright and dazzling, the snow and hoar glittering in his beams, the little robins twittering in the leafless boughs, and flights of congregated birds every now and then sweeping through the air.

The party consisted only of Mr. and Mrs. Chandos, their daughter, and Gideon.

Lucilla went first, leaning upon the young man's arm, chatting away with the most engaging gaiety and the most delightful familiarity. She almost made him forget who and what he was in this too delightful intercourse. He was infected by her liveliness and animated by her smiles, till he, in his turn, became gay, felt at ease and happy, and was, to say the truth, really as charming as she made a point of professing that she found him to be.

The two walked forwards, engaged in lively talk, Mr. Chandos, with his daughter leaning upon his arm, followed them. They were both watching them, but with different feelings. Mr. Chandos with that certain feeling of disapprobation which so often tormented him with relation to his wife, for his taste and delicacy were

being constantly offended by a something in Lucilla's way of doing even the most amiable things; which was a source of perpetual vexation to this man of a, perhaps, too exquisite refinement.

He never could quite satisfy himself whether it was her want of delicacy of perception, or his own too excessive fastidiousness, which was most in fault; and the consciousness that he was perhaps secretly unjust to her, would have softened his distaste, and probably restored his affection, if it had not been for the utter indifference for his opinion which she openly professed. She had taken her stand upon the unassailable position, that in ideas and feelings she and Mr. Chandos were radically opposed, and assuming, as a matter beyond question, that where she differed from any one, she must be right and they wrong, she followed up her ideas with an air of indisputable authority, which made it vain to contradict her.

I do not think that her faults arose entirely from vanity, for, in truth, she felt herself above either praise or censure, though of flattery she got enough and more than her share. Her object

was not applause in her proceedings; she was impelled chiefly by a love of action, the almost childish desire of being busy—whilst her self-esteem entirely prevented her being hampered with those doubts as to the propriety or ultimate good to be expected from interference, which renders action so painful an effort in many cases to others. Her generosity, upon which she prided herself, you will, moreover, have observed was not sterling generosity — that which rests upon justice and true benevolence — she forgot to restrain its impulses by a regard for other considerations, as those she looked down upon as cold and cautious thought it a duty to do.

But enough, and more than enough, of Lucilla. Mr. Chandos and his daughter are walking behind her and Gideon; Mr. Chandos annoyed, more than he can quite justify to himself, at the tone of familiarity and perfect equality which she assumes with her favourite; his daughter wondering what they are talking about, and longing to join in the conversation.

At last they have reached the side of the mere. It was a pretty winter scene. Parties of

ladies muffled up in furs, with gay scarlet or deep-blue cloaks, as was then the fashion, and wearing velvet bonnets of various colours, formed bright groups upon the ice and upon the banks. The skaters were gliding over the surface, displaying all the beautiful graces and intricate figures of the charming exercise; while, at the further end of the little lake, gay equipages, riding-horses, servants in livery, and so on, were assembled.

The party stood a little while upon the bank watching the scene. Then Lucilla said,—

"Come, Gideon, you have brought your paraphernalia, let me see you skate. I will be bound you do that as well as you do every thing else; and when you have displayed your spread-eagles and all your wondrous figures and fancies, then you shall be rewarded by pushing me and Celia by turns upon the ice, for we must have our share. My fingers are tingling to be off."

"Let me now!—let me be so happy now! I should be so proud. See! here is your chair—I should be so very glad——"

"No—off with you first by yourself—I am

dying to see you skate. I dare say you skate better than any of them."

She pressed him a little more in this manner, but he still hesitated; he seemed to like to be thus entreated. Mr. Chandos at last put an end to the little scene by saying, somewhat impatiently,—

"Put on your skates, Gideon, at once, as Mrs. Chandos wishes it, and let us have a specimen of the extraordinary excellence which she promises us."

There was something in the abrupt tone of authority, now and then assumed by Mr. Chandos, which was particularly grating to Gideon's feelings. No youth of his age would have liked it even from a parent; but, in his case, it wounded him in many ways,—it affronted him as a boy on the eve of manhood,—as an assertion of undue authority; but the sting lay in that painful sentiment, so constantly recurring, of being, as it were, set down—reduced to the old level, forced back into the former mortifying position, from which the kindness of Lucilla had endeavoured to elevate him.

It was not often, however, that Mr. Chandos thus addressed him; it was only when his temper was ruffled by the manner he so much disapproved in his wife. It was against Lucilla he was irritated, but the stroke fell upon Gideon.

Whenever such little scenes occurred, the colour would fly into the boy's face, a cloud would pass over his brow, and his eyes would fall; but he obeyed instantly any command thus issued, though with the gloomy submission of a slave rather than with the alacrity of a free, obliging spirit.

He had been more than usually elevated by Lucilla's attentions and encouragement that morning; the reverse was the more depressing. He coloured as usual; his countenance fell, he dropped the arm of Mrs. Chandos, which still rested upon his, and, sitting down instantly upon the bank, began to put on his skates without uttering a syllable.

These little scenes were always peculiarly painful to Celia. She felt so sorry—so very sorry for Gideon; she could not understand why her father would speak in a way that

seemed to her — she could not help it — so unkind. What had he done? He had not even uttered a word, except, with his usual modesty, in rejection of her mother's kindly-intended encouragement. How terrible it must be to be dashed down in this way! If her father ever were to speak to herself in such a manner, what should she do? And how much more painful it must be to Gideon!

She watched him, with her eyes fixed upon him, and lost in these thoughts. She was like one fascinated by the changes of that countenance, upon which every succession of feeling was so expressively painted. She sympathised with all that was passing within, as he sat there putting on his skates in silence; but he never looked up at her, neither did any one else observe her. Lucilla was looking vexed, as if the reproof had been levelled at her through him, and cast a meaning, supercilious glance at her husband, but he would not turn to her, nor did he seem to take any further interest in the proceedings of the young man; his eyes were directed towards the mere.

The last buckle of his skates was now fastened,

and, without casting a single glance at the party, Gideon started up, and away he flew. He skimmed over the ice like some light bird floating in the air; he turned in airy circles; he wove a thousand beautiful and graceful mazes; in fact, he skated, as he did every thing else, with a perfection quite peculiar to him. She watched him as he bent, and turned, and glided, and flew. She thought skating the most beautiful exercise in the world. She wondered she had never thought it so beautiful before. She stood there holding her father's arm, quite absorbed in watching it.

Lucilla, whose self-love and spirit of opposition were at this moment aroused in the highest degree, turned, with a little air of contemptuous triumph, to her husband, and said,—

"Well, I think I was rather right in my previsions; but I suppose Gideon will find it as impossible to please you by his skating as he does by his behaviour. For it is plain, by your manner to the poor boy, he can do nothing right in your eyes."

"He skates very well; but I cannot perceive

that it is of the least consequence to him, you, or any of us, whether he does so or not," answered her husband, coldly.

"Oh, not in the least!—not in the least! What signifies it what a poor, destitute being like him does? He has no claim—not he! What business has he with any of the charms and graces which are the proper portion only of the high-born—the rich and prosperous of this world! You need not think I don't understand all this quite well. Poor, dear fellow! What business has he, indeed, to be the handsomest, most accomplished, and most interesting creature in the universe? What business has he with a lofty spirit and noble sense of independence? What right has he to indulge his taste for good society, and his love of pleasant conversation and refined manners? Poor boy! poor boy! What has he to do but to fetch and carry, open and shut doors, come when he's called, do as he's bid, put on his skates, and display his exquisite skill at the command of his betters?"

"For shame, Lucilla! how wildly you talk!"

"Shame!—shame for what! Shame upon

those who call the burning glow of a generous shame into a happy and ingenuous countenance, who cloud a bright and fervent eye, and indulge their pride and temper at the expense of a hapless and defenceless fellow-creature!"

And she turned away, walked to a little distance, and remained there with her eyes fixed upon the skaters.

Celia's eyes now fell to the earth. She stood there with that sad, perplexed expression upon her face which was always visible when these little scenes occurred between her parents. She could not help sympathising with her mother's sentiments, though her heart revolted at her manner; but, then, to think her father wrong! — impossible!

Mr. Chandos had too high a sense of paternal dignity ever to choose to justify himself to his child; but he was stung to the quick when thus attacked before her. Moreover, he was not quite satisfied with himself; so he stood there biting his lips, deeply and painfully mortified; and he began to regard the innocent cause of these disagreeable sensations, now so perpetually recur-

ring, with something that seemed about almost to take the form of a very unjust, but not altogether unnatural aversion. It is useless, much as I like Mr. Chandos myself, to disguise it,—his fault was pride. He had indulged in too much of that over-refinement and susceptibility which, if not watched, is the basis of pride in the most benevolent!—a pride which, not manifested by any of its more odious features, such as insolence, arrogance, and disdainful indifference to the feelings of others, requires, perhaps, the more sedulously to be watched in the possessor.

The disgust which the subject of Gideon's birth excited in his mind arose from an abhorrence of every thing base and vicious, an aversion to all that was coarse and low — sentiments natural to a lofty and too highly imaginative mind — which he had, without due regard to benevolence, or even justice, associated with this unhappy child; he regarded him as one separated from him and his by a gulf impassable; as a being belonging to a class irrevocably and permanently distinct from the one he and his occupied; as the object

of every species of consideration due to misfortune and helpless inferiority—but as nothing more.

He would, and he had shewn that he would, in the most kind and liberal manner contribute to give a boy of such good natural abilities a careful education. His purse was ready to furnish the means for supplying all that would contribute to his progress in life and ultimate advantage; but it was without the slightest intention of elevating him to his own rank. He looked upon him as belonging to one immeasurably below it, and so that, to have him thus forced upwards in what he thought so romantic and absurd a manner — to have this poor foundling, this object of charity, actually thrust, as it were, upon terms of equality into his domestic circle — actually becoming the subject-matter of his wife's audacious sarcasms against himself, and before his daughter too! irritated him almost beyond his power of endurance.

Celia, he hoped and he believed, sympathised with him in his sentiments, though the sweetness and the heartfelt kindness of her disposition en-

tirely prevented her displaying them in the unamiable manner he too often did.

He turned now and looked at her. She was not watching the skaters, her eyes were fixed upon the ground; she seemed in deep thought.

"What is my Kitty thinking of?"

She lifted up her eyes to her father's face,—they were moist and troubled.

"Well, my love?"

She did not speak.

"Well, my love, what is it?"

"I cannot help being so sorry for him."

"And so am I, my child; so we must all be: his situation is, perhaps, one of the most unfortunate in which a human being can be placed; his very gifts, which excite so much enthusiasm in your mother's generous heart, will prove, perhaps, his worst bane. Pity that he appears to have a character so peculiarly in contrast with his circumstances, it makes it the more difficult to settle what is to be done with him."

Always what was to be done with him and for him, not how to treat him. Mr. Chandos

thought too little of that; and this was what Celia felt and grieved at, for Gideon's sake.

Lucilla, contrary to her usual way, seemed to have been really vexed at what had passed; and she stood there upon the bank in total silence, watching the flying figure as it wheeled among the rest.

She made no sign to him to approach, as Mr. Chandos and his daughter both thought, and secretly hoped that she would. He feeling really out of humour with himself, and wishing to do something in the way of reparation for the pain he had given; still with little reference to Gideon however, but because he saw his daughter's kind heart had been wounded.

As Lucilla would make no sign, he at last made one with his hand, and the flying figure again approached them.

"Eh! Gideon!" said Mr. Chandos, in a friendly tone, "have you quite forgotten that you promised to give my wife and daughter a skate upon the ice?"

The pleasant cordiality of the manner in which

this was said restored his good-humour at once: indeed, the delightful exercise in which he had been indulging had been almost sufficient in itself to blow away the gathering fumes of melancholy. He came cheerfully up, looking, as Mr. Chandos could not help confessing, most charmingly handsome.

"May I get the chair for you?" said he, addressing Lucilla.

She answered by a pleasant smile,—

"Oh, to be sure! You know you are to push me along the ice."

"Steady! steady!" said Mr. Chandos, and assisted to place her in the chair.

"Away!" and they are gone.

Swiftly they flew, and as swiftly returned. Lucilla was quite out of breath; she sat there recovering herself, laughing and chatting, seeming in high good-humour, and as if she were very well disposed to try again. He supported himself by the back of her chair, but he scarcely seemed to listen to her; he was looking at the bank — Mr. Chandos had said "wife and *daughter*."

He kept looking wistfully that way, and she caught his eye, and looked as if she should like so much to come down.

Mr. Chandos understood them; he so desired to please and satisfy his daughter. He said,—

"Would you like to try, my Kitty dear?"

"Very much, indeed, when mamma has done."

"Then you shall.—Lucilla, here is the poor child dying to follow your example. Will you have another slide first, or shall she take her turn now?"

"Give me your hand to help me up the bank," said she, her good-humour also quite restored by the exercise; "and put Kitty into the chair. It really is more delightful than you can imagine."

Celia was already upon the bank. Mr. Chandos was assisting his wife. With one hand Gideon steadied himself by the chair, the other was extended to hers.

He has hers in his. It is the first time such an honour has been granted him. He feels those little tender fingers grasping his own. Never mother, when the soft little fingers of her first-

born baby close round hers, felt a more delightful sensation.

Mrs. Chandos sliding and struggling, and requiring all her husband's assistance to help her up the steep and slippery bank — Gideon had to help Celia into the chair, to talk to her, to settle her. She speaks to him more sweetly and kindly than ever. She has been so sorry for him—she is so grateful to her father for this little act of good-nature — she feels so happy — she looks — oh! it is a threadbare expression to talk of an angel—she looks like one of those sweet faces beaming from the clouds in some old pictures, filled with that beaming purity of expression, that artless, tender love and joy which is in hers—he gazes with feelings of adoration, and the deepest reverence and tenderness.

The chair did not start so instantaneously as it had done before; he was obliged to pause for a second or two to recover himself, his feelings had quite overpowered him.

But he recovers himself from the momentary enchantment,—and away they fly!

Had it not been brief, it seemed as if it would almost have been too much for him.

He looked pale when he stopped, and Mr. Chandos hastily came down the bank; and this time himself took possession of his daughter, and assisted her out of the chair.

Gideon followed her with his eyes — he looked absent — lost in thought.

I do not know, if Lucilla had asked for another turn, whether he would have had courage to indulge her. Luckily she did not.

It was growing cold, the sun was sinking, and a sharp wind began to blow; they all seemed glad to return to the house. Lucilla was tired, and she was silent on their return home. She never thought of talking when not in the humour. The relief of her silence was most grateful, absorbed as he was in the sweetest reflections. Celia and her father were quite silent too. He, already far away from the little scene which had just passed, was thinking of an offer made for one of his farms which he had received that morning, and deliberating whether he should ac-

cept the proposed rent or not: she was certainly not engaged in any speculation of that nature.

Such little scenes as these often recurred during the visit, which, however, like other mortal things, at last came to an end.

CHAPTER II.

"The very ocean hath its hour of rest.
Oh me, how quiet sky and all things were!
As quiet all within me."

WORDSWORTH.

"TELL me who I am?"

He sat thrown hastily upon a chair on which he had flung himself by the side of Calantha's sofa. She was lying in her dressing-room. The leave-taking was over; the carriages had just departed, though it was a driving, snowy day. The sleet fell in thick flakes, and the wind whistled chill and mournfully.

The Chandos' party had been suddenly summoned away, and had set out that afternoon.

He had put her into the carriage himself. A

sudden blast of wind had obliged him to cast his arm round her to keep down the large fur and silk cloak, which was wrapped over her pelisse. The wind blew so thát he had almost to lift her into the carriage.

She had cowered towards him for protection against the gust.

It was perhaps that feeling, so dear to the heart of every man of tenderness, of having sheltered and protected her — of its being possible that *he* might be called upon at some future time still further to shelter and protect her, that sent him up with a sort of desperate resolution to Calantha's chamber, and prompted the question,—

"Tell me who I am?"

"My dear boy, you know."

"No, I do *not* know — you have put me off;— Alice — every body puts me off — endeavours to quiet me like a child, and I have been quieted; my enemies have called me beggar's brat — foundling — bastard, but I feel that, foundling as I am, beggar's brat or bastard I am not — I am *sure* I am not. Tell me all about it, Calantha — tell me what I am?"

She lifted up her soft blue eyes, and looking upon him with ineffable tenderness, said,—

"It was not such a night as this, but a calm autumn night, for the storm had lulled," she began; "the wind, which had been loud, had sunk into silence, the moon shone brightly over the woods, and the stars were glittering in heaven; I had been unhappy that day, though it had been a day of festivity and revelry,—the day of a dear sister's wedding. I had felt very lonely and desolate, Gideon, and as if I were alone in the world. Such feelings I often had in those days,—they were wrong, but the Almighty in His mercy forgave me, for I had suffered much. The evening, calm as it was, was rather chill, and I remember I was sitting in my large chair by the fire—I was able to sit up them—there was a ring at the bell——"

His eyes were fixed upon her as if he would have devoured her words.

"A ring—I never shall forget it—a hasty, violent, desperate, despairing ring—once only—it was as if one in agony had strength but for that one,—and all was silent. I hear them to

this day unfastening the door, and the murmurs of the men talking as they looked out into the night. They were coming in again, but my dear mother was not to be so satisfied; she went to the hall, I followed her,—we found you —poor baby!—lying upon the stones, under the shadow of one of the columns, fast asleep."

The tears were now upon her cheeks.

"Gideon, I felt alone in the world at that time—I looked upon you as the gift of God—I took you to my bosom—I wished to be a mother to you—but, ah! who can?—who can?"

"Dear—dear—dear—best friend!"

He took her hand,—he bent over it with reverence, and pressed his lips to it for some little time, thus hiding his face. At last he raised his head and said,—

"This is not all: go on."

"Some one still living had pulled the bell, so my mother felt certain. She searched all the best part of that night—my mother had so much energy and goodness; whilst I, in my helplessness, sat over the fire, and lulled the poor baby

in these feeble arms, scarcely more helpless than myself. They found no one."

"And is this all?—this all? Was it never discovered who rung that bell?—and how was that baby clothed? was there nothing on it, or was it in the beggar's rags?"

"No, my dear, the child was clothed, and its clothes have been carefully preserved; but there was no mark, no name, not even an initial letter upon any of them; but round the baby's neck there was a black riband, upon which hung two very small golden hearts, each enclosing a lock of hair, one grey, the other raven black."

"Let me see them—you have them?" eagerly.

"A moment, you shall," putting his hand a little aside; "you have not heard all yet. They were more successful in the morning than they had been at night: she whom we believe to have been your mother was found."

"Believe to have been! My mother! oh, my mother!" and he covered his face with his hands, threw himself back in his chair, and big tears trickled through his fingers.

"Believed," continued Calantha, "we could

not be sure. In that deep, dark pond, that lies in the wood below the lawn,—that pond where no one ever casts net or angle, and the path to which is so grown up now that no one ever goes near it,—they cast the nets, for the fence was broken down, and the grass trampled as if some one hastily had rushed down that way; there were footsteps, too, upon the soft ground at the brink——"

"Oh! oh!"

"They threw in the nets, and they found her."

He only groaned again, but without uncovering his face, though it was evident he was listening in a sort of agony.

"They drew out upon the bank the form of a most lovely young woman, whom my mother said could not be more than nineteen. She was simply dressed, but not as a peasant. Her long hair was fair and waving, and flowed in most beautiful abundance all round her, so as almost to cover her; her expression was tranquil, her eyes closed."

"Did you see her yourself?"

"Yes, when they had brought her in, and had laid her on the bed, her limbs composed, and dressed in her grave-clothes, I went in to see her——"

"Well! well!"

"She was laid upon the bed, her form arranged, her beautiful waxen hands crossed over her breast, her long silken hair upon each side of her face, reaching almost to her feet—her face was calm, and soft, and holy it looked. She is in heaven—she is in heaven, Gideon."

And her sobs and tears answered his.

Thick sobs, abundant tears his were.

It was some time before he spoke again; he seemed lost in contemplation of the mournful picture, and wept as if he had been kneeling by the bedside of a dying mother now.

At last he said,—

"I know where they laid her, it's in the churchyard, in the corner on the other side. The hillock is green, and is all covered over with daisies—or heaped with snow, indeed, now—there is no stone to mark the place."

"No, my dear, that was not allowed; we

were permitted to lay her in holy ground, with that we were satisfied."

"Yes," he said, humbly, "it was enough .... And now — you can and you do know — who was she? and who am I?"

"My dearest boy, we cannot even be sure that she was your mother."

"*I* am sure!" he said. "But there was surely some token — some sign?" And then, in a faltering voice, "A ring?"

"A ring there was, but not——"

"A wedding-ring?"

"No: that was the reason I have never told you this history myself, and have forbidden any one else to tell it you, until you were old enough, my dear, dear Gideon, to look upon our lot in life, as we all ought to do, as the ordination of the All-wise, and receive our portion in humility without self-abasement."

But he had risen up from his chair, had turned away and walked to the window, and there he stood looking out upon the dreary evening, and upon the snow-flakes falling thick and fast.

At last a gentle voice spoke again, and made him turn round,—

"Gideon, my dear!"

He came back to his place, and said, in a gloomy, broken voice, as he sat down by her again,—

"I knew I was a foundling—I misbelieved the bastard."

"But, perhaps—nay, we cannot be sure—it might not be!"

"No, it was my mother—every pulse within this heart tells me it was my mother—deserted and abandoned—shamed and betrayed—so young and so lovely—my poor, poor mother! Had she been alive, Calantha, do you think I would not have clung to her and shared her shame? I will cling to it and share it now, for she *was* my mother!"

A pause, while Calantha wept abundantly.

Then he said,—

"You kept her clothes, did you not?"

"And the ring, and a lock of her beautiful long hair."

"May I see them?"

"Do you see that ebony cabinet at the end of the room? this is the key," said she, giving him a small golden key, which was fastened by a black riband round her neck: "it is many a day since I have had the heart to look at them."

He took it, and stooped down and opened the door of the cabinet. It contained two drawers. In one lay, neatly folded and arranged, and covered with lavender and rose-leaves, the clothes of the hapless Miriam; above them those belonging to a baby of a few weeks old,—the miniature cap, the little frock and petticoat, and all the tiny articles of dress common to infants.

A sheet of white paper folded, and a small box of card, lay at the top.

"Bring me the box and the small packet, my dear," said Calantha.

He took them out of the drawer, disturbing nothing else.

First she opened the paper, and the tress of long fair hair unfolded itself, and fell like a

stream of shining floss silk from between her fingers; it was still of surpassing brightness, softness, and beauty.

With what strange emotions did he touch it, bend his head down and press to his lips this relic—this actual part of what had once been his mother! With what a distracting sort of contradiction did this real, substantial existence confuse with the idea of the visionary past!

Then Calantha opened the box, and drew forth the two little golden hearts and the ring. The ring was a very richly-chased ring, and had held a seal, or stone, but the stone had fallen out. The two little golden hearts shewed, through a small circular glass inserted in each, the several pieces of grey and raven-black hair.

He took them up, and examined them long and attentively: he started when he saw the initials H. F. at the back of the old man's hair, and pointed it out with a sort of hope—it seemed to make him belong to some one. Then he looked at the small star upon the other; and then he examined, with a mournful earnestness, the ring. Among the chasings at the back of

it, a very minute star, of the same figure exactly as that upon the back of the golden heart, was discernible; he compared them, and, shewing them to Calantha, said,—

"These belonged all to the same person; so, you see, it was my mother. And now tell me, Calantha, upon which finger was the ring found?"

"Upon the third finger of the left hand, of that I am certain; I made a note of it at the time, which you will find in that paper you hold in your hand, and in which the ring was wrapped; and I took the precaution to have the truth of that note confirmed by two witnesses, my father and my mother."

"Thank you — thank you! dear, dear Calantha!"

"And this is all, my boy — my dear Gideon! in vain have we made every inquiry, nothing else could we ever discover. It has been my persuasion all along, and is still my persuasion,

that your parents were not of the lower rank, and that your poor mother was a victim betrayed by treachery, not by her own levity or vice. It was impossible to look upon that pure, lovely countenance, so calm and placid in its last slumber, and not believe this; or that a creature of such admirable symmetry and delicacy was a mere offspring of common clay. I have been thought very romantic and foolish for indulging in such notions, but they cling to me; and if, dear Gideon, I have erred in endeavouring to raise you by education to that rank in society which I still believe your parents held, forgive me. I have been told by those wiser than myself—and now I am afraid they were but too right—that I should make you an unhappy man; that I ought to rear you in those coarser ideas and habits, which would, in some degree, blunt to you a too keen sense of your misfortune, but I could not bear to do so. I thought mental cultivation in itself a noble gift: I recollected how many brave and good men, nobly struggling against the most overwhelming disadvantages, had lived to secure the welfare of others, and

to their own happiness and glory. I believed, and I do believe, that nothing is impossible to energy and virtue—I see you have energy, and I know you are virtuous."

Her countenance kindled as with a glory while she spoke. But his answered not. A dark cloud hung upon it, and in his eyes there was the gloominess of despair.

"Shame!" he repeated to himself, "ineffaceable shame for that unhappy mother, and most unhappy son."

She pointed to the paper he still held in his hand, and said,—

"I do not believe it, and I never shall believe it;—that ring is to me a warrant of what I say. Your mother believed herself a wife, and probably was, though irregularly married, and afterwards betrayed and forsaken. I have heard of such things, and of the ring from the man's hand being substituted for another. Do you see this has been too large, and there is a little black silk twisted round it?

"Cheer up, Gideon. Have faith in yourself

and in her who died the victim of despair. No stain ineffaceable rests upon you; all is hidden in a deep, impenetrable cloud; but have faith in yourself as I have in you, and believe as I do, could that cloud be rolled away, that your poor mother's history would be a tale not for blushes, but for tears. Cheer up, my own boy; let not all the noble energy of your nature sink under this trial. Take up that armour, my child — the whole armour of God; accept from His hand the cup which is poured out for you. This world is not all; there is a better, where vain distinctions shall be unknown, and we shall all be happy together. Look steadily forward. Oh!" said she, with a return upon herself, which she seldom or ever made, "what would have become of me but for this hope?"

"Will it be so?—Will shame and will guilt be forgotten in that world as well as sorrow? Will the burning blushes be extinguished when tears are wiped away from all faces? Forgive me, I am but a mere boy. You must not expect too much from me. I shall try to do my best. I

shall try to imitate you and Mr. Prior. But my mother! — my poor, beautiful, drowned mother!"

And he burst into an agony of tears.

She took his hand — she wept with him — she tried to comfort him so kindly.

She spoke of those blessed truths divine which heal the broken spirit and bid hope shine in the midst of the thickest darkness—of Him who came in his pity to save the sinner and gather the wanderer into His blessed fold — of that rest, where by His ineffable mercy, we, poor, weak, imperfect, and erring, may hope through his divine remission to come — of hopes that are the blessed portion of the Christian alone.

He seemed more composed.

Then he rose and went up to the cabinet again, and opened the drawer; and he gently and reverently touched the pale lilac cotton gown, which lay so neatly folded there, and pressed the hem of the garment to his lips; and then he returned to his seat, and again took up the long lock of silken hair, and gazed at it, and kissed it, his eyes swimming in tears.

"You will give me these things?" he said.

"Most assuredly, my love;—let me hang these little lockets round your neck; see! the riband is long enough; and for the hair — sometimes I thought I would put it into a locket for you, at others I thought you would like to receive it just as I cut it off from that beautiful head."

"Indeed I do;, I like it best so."

And he again kissed it, then folded it carefully in the paper, and putting it within his waistcoat, laid it next his heart.

And now Calantha, exhausted by this scene, began to feel faint, and to look very pale.

"I am sorry, dear Gideon, but I don't feel very well," she said. "Will you give me a little sal-volatile and water from the dressing-table; —I am cold."

He looked at her.

"You are so ill! how thoughtless I am!—I forget every thing. Let me ring for Alice to come to you. You must be quiet, dear Calantha. How ungrateful and thoughtless I have been! Let me ring — forgive me — I will, indeed — I will, indeed. Don't be unhappy about me; I

will do every thing I can — every thing you wish ;" for he saw how her lip quivered as she looked at him.

" I will not abandon myself to despair, you shall see. A few hours to compose myself, I will be as I was before. I will be every thing, every thing in the world that you can desire, Calantha, — that is, as far as I can ——"

He kept hurriedly repeating, as he rang the bell, and at the same time fetched her water; while her emotion was only increased by the affection every word excited. It was, indeed, time they should separate; the scene had been too much for them both; it was well when Alice entered; — and, with a wring of the hand between them, they parted without saying a word more.

He felt it impossible to see any one, and he hurried to his own room, and flung himself upon his bed.

The wind whistled and howled, and the snow pelted against the window, and the twilight was

drawing on, for the sun had gone down behind the heavy snow-clouds. There was no bright fire blazing for him, for the fire had gone out, and the grate was cold, but the gloom around him was in harmony with his feelings. He lay there in a sort of trance, his mind teeming with images, —dismal images of the past. The tempest without, and the cold cheerlessness of his chamber, mingled with his visions of melancholy. He seemed to forget the description of the autumn night upon which he had been laid at Calantha's door; and his fancy painted his young and beautiful mother, her infant at her breast, exposed to the pitiless snow-storm.

He saw her there, with her long white garments, and her hair flowing down upon each side of her face, as Calantha had represented her when laid out and at rest; and so he saw her struggling forward in the night and through the snow.

The picture was beautiful and pathetic — ideal — unreal, but far, far more truly pathetic was the reality. The real mother, in her torn lilac cotton gown; her hair all matted and dishevelled by the wind and rain, her cheeks deformed with

agony, and eyes dry as stones, hurrying and stumbling on in the blindness of her pain and her anguish. Real, real misery, in its rags, its degradation, and its defilements!

The image of his mother seemed to have taken entire possession of his mind and of his heart. Those wild feelings with which he had rushed from the steps of Mr. Chandos's carriage to demand from Calantha the long-delayed explanation, seemed to have altogether subsided before the piteous truth of the real history.

I believe it is commonly so with dawning love, when brought into contact with any of the real, actual sufferings of life. In this case the image of his wronged and wretched mother seemed to obliterate all others. His mind appeared at present incapable of retaining any other.

It may be thought strange, perhaps, that the father had never once been mentioned between them, when Calantha discoursed upon this affecting story. She had not once alluded to him except in the remotest manner, as when she said, "It was plain the poor mother of nineteen had been the victim of treachery." Indeed her persuasion

of this was so intense, that during these many years in which this subject had been uppermost in her mind, she had never cared to know who or what he was, and whether living or dead.

And so it seemed to be with Gideon. The image of his mother was a reality. He had found his mother; he felt that he knew her, almost touched her, loved her — his heart bled for her. Her betrayer he did not even look upon in the light of a father. He felt no child's yearning or sympathy for *him*. He forgot that he *was* his father; he looked upon him only as the destroyer of his mother's fame, and as his own bitterest enemy.

Nothing had occurred, and nothing was likely to occur to shake this feeling. It became quite habitual to his mind. The thought, indeed, of his mother scarcely could arise — and how seldom was it entirely absent! — without the bitterest indignation against her destroyer accompanying it.

CHAPTER III.

"Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed,
Fair in thyself, and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need."

WORDSWORTH.

THE carriage of Mr. Chandos rolled on noiselessly over the thickly-fallen snow; the four post-horses with difficulty made their way. The night fell; the windows were coated with the white flakes; the lamps outside and the one inside the carriage were lighted at a turnpike gate where they stopped; and the father and daughter, wrapped up in their warm pelisses and cloaks, and furred to the very tip of the nose, enjoyed the journey together.

Time and tide, weather and wind, snow and sleet, sunshine and rain—it was all enjoyment to

them when they were together. He wished for no other happiness, and she had yet to learn that life had greater happiness in its stores.

I need not detain you by relating how, why, or wherefore, Lucilla happened not to be with them. I believe she had gone to pay some visit or other alone, and was to rejoin them. It is not necessary to pause to account for everybody's movements; enough they were together, and had the conversation to themselves, and could talk over every thing openly and unreservedly, which they never did, or could do, when Lucilla was there.

For, of course, she was too dictating and overbearing to listen much to the reasons, or attend much to the feelings, of other people; and therefore other people generally contrived to say very little about their concerns, and still less of their feelings, before her.

Perhaps some may wonder to see Mr. Chandos enjoying the society of a girl barely fourteen as he did, even though she was a darling daughter; but the fact was, her mind had been so carefully developed by his teaching, and she had seen so much of the world, young as she

was, that her very remarkable abilities had attained a perfection very rare at a much more advanced age; while the extraordinary sweetness and simplicity of her character entirely prevented anything of that pedantry, precocity, or forwardness, which so often renders clever girls at that age so unpleasing. He thought her the most perfect and charming creature that ever blessed a doting parent's heart; and he, really, with all his partiality, was not far wrong.

He might thank nature, and he might thank himself, for the delightful softness of a manner, in spite of its softness so delightfully animated and gay.

Nature had made the little Kitty a charming infant; and the gentle and assiduous culture bestowed by the father, his kind and tender temper, his sweet and pleasing manners, his exquisite, refined, and most delicate good taste, had assisted in unfolding this sweetest rose-bud to its now most exquisite form of the half-opened flower.

Well, there they are, extremely comfortable, sitting side by side, while the snow falls as thick

as down upon the window-panes of the carriage, enjoying a winter journey together — as they enjoyed every thing — for they were both exquisitely susceptible of every varying impression, and alive to the beauty which invests almost every form of Nature's countenance.

He stooped down, tucked the fur border of her cloak more comfortably about her feet, rubbed the tassel over the window-pane, looked out, shivered, or affected to shiver, drew his cloak more closely round him, and said,—

"Well, say what they will, there is something very agreeable in a warm, easy carriage and a snow-storm combined. The freshness of the air, when snow is falling, has in it something peculiarly pleasant to me; and, upon the whole," added he, cheerfully, "we have had a very pleasant visit."

"Very pleasant, indeed, papa! It is so long since we have been at Mordaunt Hall at Christmas; and it is a place I like so much in winter. I like those dark, melancholy woods in heavy snows, and those lovely ponds with the reeds all lances of glittering ice; and there are so many

wild birds and beasts there. I really think there is no time scarcely to be compared to winter."

"You put me in mind of the child in '*L'Ami des Enfans.*' Do you remember '*Les Quatre Saisons?*'"

"Oh, what a pretty story it was, and is! I think I never read any thing I thought so pretty. Yes, I am like that foolish little boy. I think every season when it comes the one most delightful—I am sure Mordaunt Hall is charming in summer—but I did enjoy it this time particularly. I think one reason was, that it was the first time I ever was there alone with you and mamma, and Calantha, and grandmamma, and Gideon."

"Why do you leave out your poor grandpapa and put in Gideon?" said Mr. Chandos; "your grandpapa would be very angry if he knew it."

"Oh, because—because—I believe it is very wrong; but I can*not* help being a little afraid of grandpapa—and there is something in me that does so dislike to be afraid—and I am not the least afraid of Gideon, who is good-nature itself,

and a great deal more, for that is shabby praise of him," said she, correcting herself.

"Why, you seem to see a great deal in this Gideon," said Mr. Chandos, "more, I confess, than I exactly do."

"I don't think, papa," said she, laying her little hand upon his in a caressing way,—"if I might venture to say so—that you are quite—quite just to Gideon."

"Perhaps not; we are whimsical creatures in our likes and dislikes. I hope I am incapable of doing any one a serious injustice as regards the sterling parts of their character. But taste is despotic in matters of liking and disliking; and, even supposing we could, I do not see that we are bound to find people pleasing whether they are to our taste or no."

"But I do so wish Gideon *were* a little more to your taste, papa!"

"He seems to be very much to yours," said he, smiling; "and I think that is quite enough to satisfy anybody; but don't insist upon his being to mine, for he is not—I don't know

how it is; but there is a something inconsistent in his bearing, and in his position, which is perpetually jarring against my sense of propriety. I think a little error has been committed in bringing him too forward. It alienates people—at least it does me. I am afraid a certain arrogance of disposition has been nourished, which the young gentleman will find the world will not bear from *him;* and, besides, I doubt his temper."

She was silent a little while—she sat considering this last speech. She would eagerly have defended him from these two accusations; but she was truth and candour itself, and she was not certain that she could.

Certainly there was nothing of humility, far less of servility, in his manner—if that was what her father meant; there was a something particularly spirited and independent, almost lofty, about him. *She* thought this so interesting, and *she* could not help esteeming him for thus maintaining this independent carriage when in a state of such distressing dependence—for there was nothing approaching to ingratitude in it. The

cares and attentions he lavished upon Calantha, his respectful manner to Mrs. Mordaunt, the patience with which he submitted to Mr. Mordaunt's reproofs and ill-humour, and the more than patience, the loving indulgence with which he bore with the tyranny, caprices, and ill-tempers of good old Alice, had excited her liveliest approbation; and yet she saw what her father meant. Then his temper—once or twice, to be sure, he had lost his temper to his superiors—and now and then, even to herself, he had seemed wayward and unaccountable; but then, when he felt every thing so acutely, and had so often to suffer, was it to be wondered at? Was *he* alone to be expected to be quite perfect when every body had so many faults of their own, and he, poor boy, with so many disadvantages?

"I have made you thoughtful, Kitty."

"Yes, papa; I was thinking—I was considering whether I thought of Gideon as you do—I am afraid I must own that I do; but then, why does what appears so disagreeable and wrong to you appear—I can't quite say why, but it does—so estimable and right to me? Is it that I am so

very sorry for him? But I am sure I am not naturally so compassionate as you."

"It is because you are more good-natured than I am, Kitty of my heart. But I must not lose your esteem, you little, kind creature, by indulging any of my fastidious whims more than need be; and if I can*not* like this Gideon, and make so much of him as all you soft-hearted women do, because I verily believe you still think of him as the poor baby found at the door, I assure you, my dear, I am very anxious to serve him, for, agreeable to my taste or not, he is indisputably a very fine young man, and has abilities and an appearance much above his birth and condition."

"How do we know what his birth is?" said Kitty.

"Pooh! nonsense!" said Mr. Chandos, with some little impatience. "Don't enter into that question, Kitty. I know there is a spirit of romance got about, which is not only absurd, but hurtful. It alienates Mr. Mordaunt, I can plainly see, this mania for passing him off for some hero in disguise. Don't give into it, my dear. All

we know, need know, or ever shall know, upon this subject, is, that he was taken up a deserted infant at your grandfather's door, and as such is the just object of pity and charity. His abilities have led Miss Mordaunt, your aunt, to wish, and justly to wish, to give him an education more in conformity with his natural, than with his adventitious, advantages—so far so right, and true benevolence will dictate to us all to do what we can to forward him in a career which will entitle him to take his place among men of education; but the attempt to exalt him into something above this —the fantastical attempt to make a Prince-Valentine-and-Orson story of a very miserable tale of abandonment and suicide—is, to say the least of it, highly injurious to him, and disgusting to those who rationally wish him well."

He spoke with the acerbity which she had once or twice observed in him when this subject was agitated in his presence, as it often was by her mother, especially in her arguments with Mr. Mordaunt, who obstinately adhered to the most prosaic view of the subject. It was one of Lucilla's triumphs to shew her power over her

father's heart, by venturing to contradict him when no one else did; and to justify her patronage of Gideon, she had lately chosen to take up this view of the subject, to the secret delight of Calantha, and much to the provocation of her husband, who looked upon the boy as only too much spoiled already among them, and in danger of being a great deal more so now this new version of his story was come into vogue.

Celia could not help, when her father spoke of Gideon in this slighting, disparaging manner, feeling so very sorry for him. Conscious of all his admirable qualities and rare gifts, she thought it too cruel a fate thus to be excluded from the society he was so admirably fitted to adorn, and forced, as it were, to take his place in a class below their own. Inexperienced people are so apt to think it the heaviest of misfortunes to belong to a class below their own; it looks like a form of conceit and arrogance, but it is usually only a form of heedless good-nature. Mr. Chandos was more rigidly philosophical. He looked upon it as no misfortune at all to belong to a lower class. He had found too little hap-

piness in the high position he occupied in society, to care much about it as regarded another.

"But I am so sorry for him."

"Why are you so sorry for him? He will be better off than thousands of young fellows as good as he, whose fathers and mothers are slaving day and night to forward them in the world."

She saw it was quite unreasonable to be sorry for him, so her head acquiesced in the justice of what her father said, but her heart kept very sorry for him still, for she knew, wrong or right, that he suffered much. She began to wonder what they intended to do with him, so at last she said,—

"I wonder what he is to be?"

"A clergyman, to be sure! Your aunt Calantha and I settled that matter between us years ago."

How excessively silly and unreasonable she felt herself to be when there was something in this plan which she did not quite like! She had fancied him destined to take a more shining part —to achieve honour—to win himself a name.

Her father read a little dissatisfaction and disapprobation in her looks, and he felt disappointed in his turn, and again a little impatient.

"Is not the service of the Church good enough for him, then?"

"Oh, good enough! good enough for *him!* An honour to any body."

"Well, then, you foolish child, what makes you look dissatisfied?"

"Did I look dissatisfied?"

"Nay—did you feel so?"

"Well, I own I did a little. I suppose of course, if he took orders, he would be——"

"One thing, in all probability, he would never be—a bishop, or even a dean; but I should take care that he were provided with a living, not such a miserable pittance as most curacies and too many livings are, but one which would afford a comfortable livelihood to a man of simple habits and modest expectations, and in such I think he ought to be useful, and might be happy if he pleased; but when once people's imaginations become excited, and their expectations unreason-

able, there is no saying what will make them happy."

She felt so certain that in a moderate position of this nature it was impossible that Gideon should be happy—that it was as impossible as that the soaring eagle should be happy in a poultry-yard—that she could scarcely help sighing. Yet she saw so clearly, that to other people it must seem so unreasonable not to think her father's proposition most generous and most liberal, and the object of his kindness most fortunate in finding such a friend, that she really could not venture to hint at what she felt—so she only said,—

"You are so kind, papa——"

"And so wise—you will think one day, I venture to predict, though I see you do not think so now."

"My dear papa, I am so young and foolish, and of course I am quite wrong, and I beg your pardon for being so perverse, and I hope I shall soon think just as you do," she said, with great humility and sweetness.

"My darling girl, I could almost love to see you in the wrong, you shew so much candour and gentleness."

Even Kitty must not be too much praised, when her father was so gentle, she could hardly help being so too.

The subject was then dropped; and the father and daughter began to discuss other things. They talked of home and various improvements they were devising and carrying out together in the gardens, and in which they took the greatest pleasure; and then they went on to talk of the health of a certain Sir Philip Scrope, whose estate adjoined that of Mr. Chandos, and to whom, personally, he was very deeply attached; for Sir Philip was a man of rare talents and accomplishments, and having been long in a very precarious state of health, he lived almost entirely at his seat in the country —doing that from necessity which Mr. Chandos did from taste; and the consequence was, that the closest intimacy, amounting to a real friendship, subsisted between the two gentlemen. Celia, too, was very much attached to

Sir Philip; to whose house, from her childhood, she had been accustomed to go with her father, and where she was received with even more than the partial affection she met with from every body.

A little thing, she had sat upon Sir Philip's knee looking at pictures—that is to say prints, of which he possessed a very extensive and valuable collection, and the privilege of turning over which was confined to herself. This child, like all other intelligent children, had extreme pleasure in looking at prints. Sir Philip, too, would talk to her about them; and as her mind expanded he had shared with her father in the delight of forming her taste and fostering her talents.

She loved him dearly; and she now talked with much interest over a letter received that morning from Bath, where he then was, and whether he would not suffer from this intense cold, &c. &c. &c.

CHAPTER IV.

"No cruel guard of diligent cares that keep
Crown'd woes awake, as things too wise for sleep;
But reverend discipline, religious fear,
And soft obedience find sweet biding here."

CRASHAW.

CALANTHA spent a restless night.

She had been too much fatigued with the conversation that had passed, to see Gideon again that evening, and felt unable to judge of the effect the relation she had made would have upon his mind. His dark, gloomy looks of despair, his deep grief, his sense of injury, his passionate resentment of his mother's sufferings—all the different feelings he had displayed filled her with anxiety. What would be the effect produced upon a character so ardent as his by this full disclosure of the circumstances of his birth?

Would the sense of the obscurity, the stigma under which that birth lay, arouse him to those generous struggles against adverse circumstances which had ennobled many a brave man born under disadvantages as great? Or would he become embittered and misanthropical, inclined to quarrel with, and hate the world in which he at present found no adequate place, and whose prejudices, if prejudices they are to be called, were all against him—or, still worse, would he sink into the indolence of melancholy discouragement?

Would the religious principles she had so sedulously endeavoured to inculcate serve him now? Would those sentiments of piety and submission, which had carried herself in peace through a life of mortifications, privations, and sufferings, support him too? There is an indistinct feeling in women that the pious submission to the will of God, the cheerful acquiescence in His appointment, in that which some call destiny, and others necessity, which is so in character, seems so natural to the woman —is less to be expected, almost less to be

desired, from the man. There was something in herself which she almost felt as if she did not wish to see in Gideon. This humble submission, this passive resignation to the will of God, in which she lived, scarcely suited her ideas of the influences which ought to impel the active, talented man.

Her ideas were confused and uncomfortable. She could not inculcate upon this fine intellectual youth, burning for action and distinction, starting into life and preparing to enter the arena of the world and make his way among men, the ascetic, the almost hermit-like virtues, which she herself practised. And yet, she thought, as she lay pondering these things in her heart, where else shall he anchor? Where would he find in this world any stable rock whereon to lay the foundations of his life, but upon Him, the Rock of Ages, the source of all duties, the bond of all relations? Where shall the orphan find courage but in a cheerful reliance upon Him who is the Lord of all? What guide, but in His law? What true aim, but His favour? What is all

the rest, and where does it end,—but in vanity —vanity —vanity?

'And yet, even if I could—if he were of the temper of which religious devotees are made—if he could be moulded so as to live independent of, and in contempt and indifference towards, that world upon which he is entering—as some most excellent men have done—would I desire it?'

She could not answer that she would. She feared she was wrong—she felt that perplexity which many have felt, from a sort of confused and, as I believe, very imperfect idea of the true Christian's character. She was still for fasting often with the disciples of John instead of embracing the wide-extended, enlightened view of morality and religion, which belonged to Him who brought us the true light.

That light at length dawned upon her. It came in the ruminations of that long night, and she now perceived the true direction into which the character of the man should be thrown.

That the Lord should be set always before him; the truth of His existence as a personal, living, present God, be as a part of the mind, as it were,—the light and the life of it. More, that the Divine law of the ever-living, ever-present Master, should be received as a reverenced guide, as if that Master, still visible upon earth, were present to our senses as He was to His disciples before He returned into that far country whence He sees us, but where we no longer perceive Him. Yet, that this service was to be paid in the strength and the courage of free Christian liberty. Not offered in the spirit of a slave, but as the free-will offering of a son, and that while in this world it was the part of a man and a Christian to work in this world boldly and freely.

And now the morning breaks upon her, and she is dressed and laid again upon her sofa. Her existence had lately, indeed, become little but a wearisome exchange from sofa to bed, from bed to sofa. She very rarely left her room. Most often she lay there endeavouring to endure with patience that half existence of languid helplessness to which, with her mind all activity,

the obscure disease under which she languished condemned her.

After breakfast was over, she heard his knock at the door, as was his custom, for he never omitted visiting her room when she was confined to it before he entered upon any occupation or amusement of the day.

"Come in. Is it you, as usual, my dear boy?"

"Yes," said he, and he entered.

She looked anxiously at him.

He looked grave, serious, more serious than she had ever seen him look before; but the settled gloom of the last evening had passed away, a clear light was in his eye, and his darkened brow was serene and open. He came to her and knelt down on one knee by her side, and took her hand and kissed it with a deep, earnest fervour.

"My dear Gideon—my dear boy!" she said, looking at him with all the generous affection she felt expressed in her mild eyes. "It does me good to see you look thus. I think I may venture to feel sure, my love, that the reflections of your night have ended in peaceful satisfaction,

as mine have done, for indeed I have been thinking of you all night, Gideon."

"Your kindness, your generous affection is so great, so wonderfully great, to a poor deserted foundling, associated only with recollections of sorrow and guilt, I cannot ever hope to repay it—I can only feel it, Calantha, and *that* I do!"

"Yes, but you can repay, and richly repay the little I have been able to do for you. Only promise to be ever that which I am sure by the light at this moment in your eye that you are now—for my sake—the sake of one who loves you very dearly, look upon your position at once with courage—receive the portion allotted to you with cheerful alacrity. To all of us our several task, our several strife with evil is allotted. You, my dear boy, are born to prove once again, with the many thousands and thousands who have suffered in the cause of that truth, how wide-spreading is evil—how awful guilt, which entails not alone upon the guilty head, but upon many, many innocent ones, the miserable consequences of a crime! It is

a truth, but a deep, deep mystery! but is not all evil mystery? The apparent injustice of such a sentence revolts the heart, and tempts us to the fatal rebellion of a questioning spirit. Resist that spirit, my own boy: God is infinitely good, and great, and wise; He is unquestionably faithful and true. He has allowed of this—He has instituted this law; but He has made no false promises as regards this life—He has not promised us happiness, but opportunity; and in His mercy has lifted the veil and shewn us the indistinct but glorious vision of realms where there shall be a restitution of all things! 'The Lord loveth a cheerful giver;' so doth He a cheerful acquiescence. He has called you to this post. Whether it be to shew how far a generous and dauntless spirit can triumph over the most grievous disadvantages, or to shew that the evils entailed by a crime are not to be averted—whether to triumph or to fall, we know not. May my Gideon be found in his place, unflinching in the combat, whether the fleece be dry, or the blessings of God fill it with the dews from heaven."

She spoke with enthusiasm, and every word had its effect. Every thought she uttered responded to some thought in his heart. He had been questioning the justice of the sentence under which he lay—he had been tempted to revolt and murmuring.

"We are certain—we *know*, that He is merciful, wise, and good; we know that, according to the constitution of this present world, our parts are different, our joys and sufferings unequal. If we are selected to serve Him in suffering, will we not do it, Gideon? Do we only love God for what we can get?"

He felt cheered and strengthened by every word she uttered. The darkness which had already begun to dissipate seemed to break up and vanish away.

Cheerful hopes began to dawn, as honest, good intentions succeeded to despondency and reluctance. As a soldier arises unwillingly from slumber, but, once aroused, buckles on his knapsack, seizes his musket, and cheerfully recommences the march or the battle of life, so he felt, ready to act or suffer, stand or fall, in the ser-

vice of that great and good Master, on whom even to think—far more, earnestly to love and serve, exalts to the true ideal of human nature.

He who walks with God, who lives in His presence, whose mind is filled with the image of wisdom far above human wisdom, goodness far above human goodness, justice to which a last appeal may be made, and with whom justice will ever be found—he who sees His beauty in this garb of external nature, so exquisite an exposition of the Divine mind, for, shattered and disordered as it is by some evidently external force, enough remains to prove the beauty, grace, and order of the unblemished original—he who does this lives in a new element. His thoughts, his imagination, his views, are purified and elevated. He, it is, who, far beyond the most imaginative poet, lives, as I said before, in the true ideal of being.

He felt all this, if he did not, as I feebly have done, endeavour to give the feeling words. He had been hurt and wounded even by the kindest hearts around him. Misunderstood, and, for no fault of his own, set aside.

There was One before whom all these vain distinctions,—all save the distinctions founded upon the reality of good, of virtue, would disappear. There was One who, listening to the cry of the raven's brood, would not forget the deserted child, the solitary man!

He bowed in spirit and worshipped.

It was the grand crisis of his fate. From that time forward he hesitated, faltered in purpose, desponded, and murmured no more. He became at once, young as he was, a formed man. All the soreness with which he had felt the daily trifling and unintentional mortifications inflicted upon him by those around, and under which his sensibility had smarted so intolerably, had no longer power to disturb him. He was henceforward candid and just; he appreciated the good intentions of his friends, and felt for their difficulties as well as his own, under that perplexing position into which, by no fault of any of them, he had been thrown. With spirits renovated and mind clear, he set himself strenuously to his present task of cultivating his

abilities to the utmost extent of his powers, and profiting by the opportunities he enjoyed.

He became open, amiable, and gentle in his manners. The susceptible pride, the sullen gloom, were gone. Serious he was, beyond his years. Gideon smiled, but seldom laughed; and in the noisy and more boisterous sports common to young men of his age he never joined. But in games of skill or agility he was not found wanting. He played cricket admirably, rode well, and boated well. Whatever he undertook he did well. Some have this rare gift of universal aptitude—precious but dangerous endowment: with him it proved only precious!

His advances at school had been great—they now became wonderful. Mr. Singletrees was proud to the highest degree of his accomplished pupil, and longed for the time when he should reap those honours at the University which should make men ask where he had been educated.

And here, I think, before proceeding further, I will insert a few of those maxims by which

Mr. Prior had endeavoured to regulate his pupil's life, or, rather, to incite him to regulate it himself. They appear to me to be so judicious as to be well worth offering to the consideration of my readers, though I must not claim for Mr. Prior the merit of originating them—he had borrowed them from another, still wiser and more admirable than he was himself.

He, like most of those who have endeavoured at, or succeeded in cultivating their minds to any degree of perfection, had been in the habit of making extracts of such passages in his various readings as either struck him as new, or as setting an acknowledged truth in a clearer light, and making it peculiarly striking to the mind, or impressible upon the memory. Many of the maxims thus preserved he had often in his mouth, and some of them were such as these:—

"Mankind, in general, mistake difficulties for impossibilities. That is the difference between those who effect and those who do not."

He particularly enforced this text, if I may call it one, in discoursing with Gideon, whose life, as he frankly told him, was one great diffi-

culty, under which a less energetic mind would sink and effect nothing; but the struggle with which might, if bravely persevered in, nerve and strengthen in him a power not only sufficient to raise him to a level with more fortunate men, but to enable him to surpass them.

For thus much, would he add, may be said in favour of strenuous exertion, "That the more a man has to do, the more he finds himself capable of doing, even beyond the direct task."

"All the men who have done things well in life have been remarkable for decision of character."

"Tacitus describes Julius Cæsar as '*Monstrum incredibilis celeritatis atque audaciæ.*'"

"Vigour, energy, resolution, firmness of purpose, these carry the day. In my opinion, more men fail from want of vigour than from want of talents."

"Is there one whom difficulties dishearten, who bends to the storm? he will do little. Is there one who *will* conquer? that kind of man never fails."

"Beware of idleness, the listless idleness that

lounges and reads without the severity of study —the active idleness, for ever busy about matters neither very difficult nor very valuable."

"Possibly it may require as much industry to be best billiard-player as senior wrangler."

"Believe me, idleness is the greatest prodigality."

"You are not naturally idle, but take heed to direct your industry to right ends."

"You must, above all things, teach the world that you are not wood or straw—that what you have resolved on that you will do; no wavering, no hesitation, no listening to the seductive voices of despondency or indolence. This character you must deserve and maintain."

"But if resolute and determined, as I hope and believe you will be, take care that your life is grounded upon clear and distinct views of what constitutes the real good—the *summum bonum* in all its various aspects."

"Plato said, better to err in acts than in principles."

"You are approaching to manhood," said he to Gideon one day; "look steadily at the life before you. Do not flinch from the consideration of the *fact*. No human being was ever truly great who had not learned the necessity and acquired the habit of looking the *fact* steadily in the face. All men, but you most especially, must be prepared to hold a very inferior station in life to that to which you might aspire, unless you resolve, with God's help, that whatever you do you will do it *well*."

"Be assured, that it is better to accomplish perfectly a very small amount of work, than to *half-do* ten times as much."

"What you would know, know thoroughly."

"An eminent lawyer (Sir Edward Sugden) was asked the secret of his success. His answer was, 'I resolved, when beginning to read law, to make every thing I acquired perfectly my own, and never to go to a second thing till I had entirely accomplished the first. Many of my competitors read as much in a day as I read in a week; but at the end of twelve months my knowledge was as fresh as the day it was

acquired, while theirs had glided away from recollection.'"

"Let a masculine determination to act to some purpose go through your life. Do the day's work to-day."

At other times, when he saw Gideon inclined, in the ardent pursuit of some present object, to neglect the just demands of others, in their way of equal claims to his attention, he would say,—

"Be punctual. I do not merely mean being in time to fulfil predetermined engagements, lectures, &c. &c., but I mean cherish that spirit out of which punctuality grows, that accuracy, precision, and vigour, which makes the efficient man, the determination that what you have resolved to do *should be done*, in spite of all temptations to the contrary."

"Nelson said, 'I have always been a quarter of an hour before my time, and it has made a man of me.'"

Speaking of conscience, he would often quote these words:—

"'I want to enlarge the province of conscience, and make it condescend to what may appear minor matters. Have a *conscience* to be fitting yourself for life in whatever you do, and in the management of your mind and of your powers. Gird up the loins of your mind."

"On method in the arrangement of time depends much."

"'Method,' says Cecil, 'is like packing things in a box, a good packer will get in half as much again as a bad one.'"

"If you mean to be an effective man—and such a man you must be or you will be a miserable one, Gideon,—set about it earnestly and *now*. No man ever yet yawned it into being with a wish."

"Watch yourself; notice when you fail, and keep some kind of journal of your failures."

"But, above all," he would say, with a most deep and touching seriousness in his tone, "avoid the coolness, the indifference,—the illogical indifference, I will venture to call it, which so many men, who profess to believe in the all-important,

the stupendous subject, allow themselves in practically with regard to Religion."

"This contradiction in men of feeble characters, or feeble reasoning powers, may not be to be wondered at; but in men of vigour and intellect the careless manner in which they suffer themselves to float on through life without ever strenuously grappling with the subject, astonishes me. Let no such inconsistency weaken and confuse your perception of the just values and relations of things."

"You have begun to taste the worth of those ideas which raise and elevate the whole temper of the man by throwing him into relations with the infinite. Believe me he is, after all, but a poor, miserable, one-sided being, where such wide-extended views of his nature, his purposes, and his hopes, are wanting."

"Hold fast by the *faith*, and remember what one of the best and most manly characters I ever knew gave as his experience with respect to prayer:—

"'I am bound to acknowledge that I have

always found that my prayers have been *heard* and *answered*. Not that I have in every instance (though in almost every instance I have) received what I asked for, nor do I expect or wish it. I always qualify my petitions by adding, provided what I ask is for my real good and according to the will of my *Lord*. But with this qualification I feel at liberty to submit my wants and wishes to God in small things as well as in great; and I am inclined to imagine there are no *little things* with Him. We see that His attention is as much bestowed upon what we call trifles as upon those things which we consider matters of mighty importance. His hand is as manifest in the feathers of a butterfly's wing, in the eye of an insect, in the curious aqueducts by which a leaf is nourished, as in the creation of a world and the laws by which the planets move.'

"'To our limited powers some things appear great and others inconsiderable; but He, infinite in all things, can lavish His power and His wisdom upon every part of His creation. Hence,

we may feel encouraged to offer our prayers upon every thing which concerns us.'"*

Such had been the principles enforced by that good man, and the result was what might have been expected from the judicious culture of such a plant.

Mr. Prior, in his quiet, silent way, looked at him with eyes glistening with approbation, and the heart of Gideon glowed with renewed desire to do well.

The reports which were sent to Calantha were by her forwarded to her sister, who, exulting in her own penetration, read them to her husband and to her daughter.

Mr. Chandos was not cold in his expressions of approbation—Celia said little.

Her own education was advancing rapidly—

* Those who have read the beautiful life of Sir T. Fowell Buxton by his son—and all who have not may be strongly advised so to do—will be at no loss to discover whence Mr. Prior's maxims are derived.

her own character ripening into perfection under the continued attention of her father; the lovely girl was now fifteen—Mr. Chandos, after some delay, had decided at last upon sending Gideon to Oxford.

CHAPTER V.

"No roofs of gold o'er splendid tables shining,
No sails of Tyrian silk proud pavements sweeping,
Nor ivory couches costlier slumbers keeping;
But walks and unshorn woods, and souls just so
Unforced and genuine."

CRASHAW.

WHILE the deserted and unfortunate son was thus rapidly advancing to maturity, what had the father been doing?

He had been absorbed for the whole of these eighteen years in all the cares and occupations of public life. Sometimes in, sometimes out of office, in which latter part, with all its temptations to factious opposition, he was eminently formed to triumph. In the animating search for objections against every measure of a minister, however unexceptionable it might be in principle or prudent in practice, who so indefatigable as Ridley? Who

so cutting in ridicule, who managed the sophistries of criticism more ably? Who blinded men's eyes more successfully by plausible truths in speculation, which none knew better than he would prove in practice hollow falsehoods? Who more audacious in his accusations, — more daring in his defence of untried plans, — more loud in his censures — more unsparing in his sarcasms upon every thing that was done, or left undone?

Or who, when it became his turn to steer the vessel of the state — his turn to *do*, instead of to declaim — more cleary discerned what sacrifices of mere theory the necessities springing from the complication of actual living facts impose, or felt more truly,—

"Combien l'art est moins aisé que la critique?"

He had, however, the spirit and the daring to cast his theories to the winds when, as I said, it became his turn to take a share—and a large one—in the government of which he was not, however, the ostensible head; and he made a very able and popular minister. Every year added to his reputation and increased his power: he had now

attained the summit of his ambition ; his influence was unbounded, and his name, whether for praise or blame, in every one's mouth. His home, under the management of the Lady Angelina, became the centre of all that was distinguished in the great world. To be of her parties was to be, or not to be, in *society* — was to be, or not to be, in existence ; the most prosperous, the most influential, the most beautiful, the most noble, sickened like Haman if Mordecai bowed not at the gate — faded and perished away if not admitted to the assemblages at Avonmore House.

I need not, I believe, tell you that Ridley, in spite of all this, was not a happy man. It is the usual way with us, story-tellers, who aim to be moral, to pay you with, rather I am afraid, delusive pictures — to represent virtue in rags as very happy,—and vice, in purple and fine linen, as extremely miserable. I am afraid, as things go, that Eugène Sue is more true to fact in his pictures ; and that though atrocious crimes and sublime virtues usually produce these consequences, yet that there is still a vast deal of suc-

cessful wrong that is very well contented, and numbers of undistinguished sacrifices to right that meet with no recompense here; and I fully agree with him, when he triumphantly asks, "And were it not so, could virtue possibly have an existence?—would not all goodness be degraded to a mere selfish calculation?"

Ridley might, I fear, have done many, many wrong and unprincipled things, as he did, daily and hourly, do things inconsistent with strict rectitude and nice honour, and, provided he was never found out, have enjoyed his success very much, without troubling himself to revert to the means employed in its attainment. But unfortunately for him, at the very outset of life, he had mistaken his own character, and made a fatally false calculation. He thought himself born for ambition—he forgot he was also born for love,—he had not a cold, though he had a selfish heart. He knew himself to be selfish—he thought himself therefore cold; as others, knowing themselves to be loving, conclude they must be generous,—neither one nor the other follows. Many have the strongest affections for

those who *belong* to them, yet only love themselves reflected in others. It neither proves you generous because you love, nor incapable of love because you are ungenerous.

Ridley had run the round of vice; but his heart was formed to centre at home. His happiness would have been found in the devoted admiration, the blind, passionate attachment of some delightful woman, whose love would have been content with the endearing place of only living for his sake, and ministering to his ease and happiness. He was one to find the highest satisfaction in thus being loved at home—in thus having, when the hurry of external life was over, the paradise of home ready prepared to receive him, and decked out by some fond one, who only asked leave to make him happy.

Such was his romance, and such a romance he would have found realised in Miriam. But it was necessary to his satisfaction that his pride should be ministered to as well as his heart, his imagination as much excited as his affections; to be adored by a poor, inexperienced girl, of Miriam's pretensions, was a feeble and worthless triumph;

to have the observed of all observers, the cynosure of all eyes, the miracle of beauty, and the idol of fashion at his feet—*that* was the crowning success, the summit of felicity.

He married, as we have seen, this distinguished creature, who had, or fancied that she had, fallen in love with him. Experienced as he was, he had yet to learn what different sentiments that term is used or abused to imply. Caprice, fancy, ambition, vanity, contradiction, folly—any of these is enough to produce the phenomena in an empty girl's heart. Caprice, and vanity, and contradiction, had been the motive springs to the passion the Lady Angelina professed for the young and distinguished statesman. As for generous affection, genuine esteem, tender devotion, real desire for his happiness—how could he have been so stupid as to believe the influence of any passion could call them to life in the barren, arid desert of the Lady Angelina's bosom?

He did, however, expect it, and with all the *exigeance* proper to a character so selfish, yet so susceptible and imaginative as his. What little

disposition to affection there might have been he soon alienated altogether by the extravagancies of a temper never to be satisfied. A very few months found him a solitary man, and his wife involved in that Maelstrom of the fashionable world, from whence there is no redemption for such as she was.

His heart—or rather that part of his imagination which he called his heart—then fastened upon his two children.

As children he cared little for them, and seldom, as I have told you, even saw them; but he had directed the course of their education, had spared no expense upon it, and looked forward with hope and pleasure to the day when his sons should rival the distinctions of his own early years, and come forth the accomplished and admired inheritors of his splendid fortunes and honours.

For the eldest his own and his mother's estates; for the youngest, a career like his own was to provide. How he had nursed himself in this fond dream, it is useless to relate. This was his weakness—this was his fool's paradise—that

dear, dear fool's paradise — the place on earth in which we all of us love best to dwell.

How he had been disappointed, I have told.

He had now changed his political *rôle*, and had, after his long and successful triumphs in the Lower House, entered the House of Lords with an Earl's title. Not to be laid upon the shelf, but to maintain the interests of his party (he called it country), with the same indefatigable energy there which he had displayed elsewhere— leaving the battles of the Commons to be fought by his partner and nominal premier.

His name was in every mouth ; every thing that was done, good or bad, was attributed to his influence ; he might be called at this juncture the most eminent man in the United Kingdom.

It was the Easter holidays.

It had been the custom, ever since Gideon's friendship for Mr. Prior began, that at the Easter holidays, of only one week, instead of returning to Mordaunt Hall, he should be al-

lowed to go home with that gentleman, who always paid a visit to his mother at that time, and was well pleased to take his favourite little boy with him. As he grew older, the liberality of Mr. Chandos enabled Calantha to make this arrangement a source of mutual advantage, by insisting upon Mr. Prior accepting a little sum in exchange for the additional instruction he bestowed at these times,—and this last year of his stay at the school, a considerable part of the summer vacation it was agreed should thus be spent.

The two friends were extremely happy together.

They used to enjoy that cottage in the deep glen, where the mother dwelt, — hanging, as it did, like a bird's nest among the cliffs of that deep glen, and over the bubbling little river that foamed and ran, forming innumerable cascades and tiny cataracts below.

That cottage, all embowered in clematis and delicate cluster-roses, and with the tall elm-trees which grew upon the little platform whereon it stood, hanging over it,—and its tiny parterres,

and its little fence of paling all interwoven and overgrown with honey-suckles and sweet-briar.

The industry and moderation of the good usher, combined with his rare abilities, had worked to their full effect in this his humble sphere. The salary he now received from Mr. Singletrees, added to his allowances from Calantha, and his mother's indefatigable industry, had produced comfort in this unambitious abode.

All they desired, simple as were their tastes, was here, and in plenty. Wholesome food, warm shelter, excessive cleanliness, order, elegance even — at least as far as such simple arrangements could be called elegant. Abundance of flowers, all the charms which Nature could lavish upon the sweetest and prettiest of rock and copsy solitude, books, affection, and the blessing of God upon the lowly dwelling.

Here Mr. Prior, in the blessed intervals of rest from his school labours, tasted all those joys which wait upon a good man's life — enjoying that success in his righteous and benevolent aims, which is sure, sooner or later, to crown a courageous perseverance. I wish I had space—it

would be a story in itself—to trace the gradual effects of his gentleness and wisdom upon a character so rude and undisciplined as that of Mr. Singletrees. I must content myself with saying, that every year he improved in softness, conscientiousness, and self-command, under the influences of this pure example. The school which Mr. Prior had redeemed by his efforts from all its brutality and barbarity, flourished under his care, even beyond his most sanguine hopes. He was esteemed, beloved, reverenced, by the man whom his influences had softened and harmonised; adored by the mother so beloved, whose grey hairs found a blessed repose after the sufferings and labours of her strenuous day under his roof; and had laid his poor maniac sister, after efforts unparalleled to procure the means of her comfort and recovery, in a peaceful grave, after one faint gleam of returning reason had blessed him. His mind enriched with those real treasures which high mental cultivation accumulates; and last, but not least, finding an object of unceasing interest in the progress of this remarkable boy, thus thrown into close connexion with him, and, in

their mutual esteem and affection, the most heart-felt delight: Mr. Prior was happy, if ever mortal man could be called so.

This summer, more especially, was one period of unmixed satisfaction to both. To have Gideon an inmate of his home for so many weeks, and in weather so transcendently lovely as it happened to be this summer, was the highest gratification Mr. Prior could enjoy; and his enjoyment was scarcely equal to that of the young man himself —full of the most rare sensibility to all that was beautiful, just young enough, and just old enough, to enjoy the charms of nature in the most rapturous degree, and his mind so fitted and excited by the studies in which he was engaged as to feel neither *ennui* nor vacuity in this solitude ——

You may picture them sitting upon a seat of twisted oak-branches placed under a weeping ash-tree's pendent branches, which hang down to the very edge of the little precipice upon which the seat is perched, looking down into the ravine, filled with the dancing, plashing waters; a little table with pens and paper is before them, and a great heap of formidable-looking books upon the

grass by their side, deep in their studies.—Or, with staff in hand, toiling among the winding and almost inaccessible crags of this devious glen, Prior culling flowers, while the young man meditates verses that never are to see the light. Then they come home so hungry to tea, which is spread upon the little pembroke table in the low parlour. The gentle old lady, as usual, in her black silk dress and snow-white widow's cap, her tray of carved wood and little hissing urn before her, making tea in her blue china cups, and handing the fragrant and steaming beverage to the two friends, engaged in never-ending discussions, or cutting themselves huge slices of brown bread and butter.

Or, the moon rises, and tints the tops of the rocks and bushes, and glances on the sparkling waterfall, and the stars come out one by one, and it is the hour—"the still, the silent, save when silence yields to the night-warbling bird,"—the hour of confidence, when the inner heart is opened, and all its hoarded secrets to a true friend's ear disclosed. It was at such times that, walking up and down the little green plat-

form at the top of the rock, in front of the cottage door, Gideon would open his thoughts to his friend, and they would, again and again, go over the subject of his birth and of his mother's fate. Then Mr. Prior would, in accents and in words too eloquently persuasive for me to attempt to repeat, enforce those truths which Calantha had presented, strengthen his best aspirations, encourage his honest purposes, and console his regrets.

One subject alone, hidden in the very, very inner chamber of his heart, remained untouched. It was there—it was ever there, more, perhaps, than even he himself was aware. His time was so occupied with business, his thoughts so full of the promises of that new life upon the threshold of which he was standing, that the image seemed to have sunk and shrouded itself even from his observation, amid all the intricacies of these various feelings. For the rest, he had no secrets from Mr. Prior. Together they speculated upon the future, and vainly endeavoured to read the enigma of the past. A circumstance which happened one day threw a sort of dim, fantastic kind of light,—at least, so they fancied, upon it.

They were sitting together one evening upon their favourite seat, enjoying the view of the sun as it set behind the side of the ravine, and threw its bright rays upon the summit of the opposite rock, tinting the tops of the shrubs and trees with a golden light and glory, while all the ravine lay below in deep shadow,—when they were aware of a tall, thin, ungainly-looking man, whose hair of silvery grey fell over his coat-collar, whose shoes were dusty with travel, his dress neglected, though not beggarly, and who, with a large, low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat upon his head, to shade his eyes from the sun, and his staff of knotted crab-tree in his hand, was ascending slowly the little winding path which led from the road by the side of the river up to the cottage.

"Who is coming now?" exclaimed Gideon; "a singular-looking personage—not one that belongs to this neighbourhood. Oh! a tourist, by his knapsack! I dare say, Mr. Prior, you are becoming famous, and people that come to see sights pass out of their way to stare at you."

"I shall never come to that honour," said Mr. Prior, "except it be through your doings; when you are a celebrated man, Gideon, people may ask, Who taught the boy? . . . . But, I protest! who else can it be? It is—it is he!—my friend of last summer!—new friend and old friend in one!—Abel, as I'm alive!"

Mr. Prior had, during the last summer vacation, indulged himself, you must know, with a pedestrian tour to the Lakes, and here he had met with Abel. There was something in the two men certain to run together if once they met. They became acquainted; Abel offered himself to Mr. Prior as a guide through the lovely mountain wilds he loved so dearly and knew so well; acquaintance ripened into esteem, and they parted as if they had been old friends.

Mr. Abel had half promised to visit Mr. Prior at his little hermitage in the course of the next summer, and it was plainly he who was toiling up the steep, every now and then stopping to rest those long, ungainly limbs, so little fitted for feats of activity, turning round to look at the view behind him, and lifting up his hat to wipe his

forehead with a red cotton pocket-handkerchief, which was carefully, after the service performed, replaced in the corner of his hat again.

"It is certainly Abel," said Mr. Prior, rising up to meet him; "that peculiar-shaped hat, and that red pocket-handkerchief, would mark him among a thousand, even without that peculiar bend of the knee and stoop of the shoulders, which brings this giant to a level with us ordinary men."

So saying, he hastened down the little path to give the good man a hearty greeting, whilst Gideon remained standing where he was.

The two friends soon emerged from among the thickets, ascending the little road, Abel, as usual, talking away, and Mr. Prior, as usual, responding by little brief sentences, and in his gentle and courteous tone of voice, and with his sweet and cordial smile.

"Well, friend," Abel was saying, "this is a toilsome ascent, it must be confessed, even to one used to mountain-paths in mountain-gorges, as I am, and I can't think why it can't be made to wind about a little more easily. Heigh ho!—

well, my old limbs feel this a little, and my poor old chest too. But it's a pretty place when you're at it—a very pretty place! You called it a lodge in the wilderness, you know, but you didn't tell me what a sweet, pretty lodge it was. Well, and that's your parlour-window, all covered over with flowers? How the flowers do seem to grow here! Aye, aye," striking his staff into the soil, "a choice little bit of earth this where you've planted yourselves. I never saw such a pretty wilderness but once. And that good lady in the widow's cap is your mother, and, heigh day! who's this stripling? Your brother or your son?"

"Neither," said Mr. Prior, "this is a young pupil of mine; we call him Gideon here, for we love him too much for forms. Gideon—Mr. Abel."

The twilight had drawn on, and the place where they stood was now so much under the shadow of the rock that it was impossible to distinguish features.

"A well-grown youth," said Mr. Abel: "you did not tell me you took pupils, Prior."

"This is the first, and will, in all probability, be the last," said Prior; "I do not much fancy denizens of this sort, but Gideon and I love each other."

"Well, well, nobody has had greater experience, or, perhaps, may boast of greater success with their pupils, than I; but it's a vexatious office—a vexatious office."

"Well," said Mr. Prior, "we will talk that matter over at supper, for there will be my good mother quite ready to receive us, and I want to make you and her acquainted, so come along, my good friend."

They entered the house, and Mr. Abel made his somewhat formal and lengthy compliments to the good mother, which having done, he turned round to address Mr. Prior, just as Gideon, having taken off his hat, entered the room.

The little parlour was lighted by two candles, and the light fell full upon his face as he approached the table.

Abel gave a start.

"My goodness!" he cried, "what—what,

Prior—what did you say was the young gentleman's name?"

Prior hesitated. — He had been called Nones when it was necessary to give him a surname, till they had all been so accustomed to use it that they seemed to have forgotten its impropriety, but as he had lately been observed to start and colour whenever that name was used, it had been left off by all his friends, and, by the substitution of a letter, they had altered it to Jones. Nevertheless, it was little used, and as Gideon alone he was mentioned among them.

" My pupil, Gideon, did I not tell you?"

While the colour flew into Gideon's face.

" But what's his family name? for I never saw such a likeness. Who's your father and mother, young gentleman? for you are so like a quondam pupil of mine, and have a bligh of another who was not my pupil, that I never saw the like."

Gideon looked distressed; Mr. Prior answered for him.

" Gideon has had the misfortune to lose both his parents."

"Well, then, I must be out, unless, indeed, his parents might be related. Had you ever any relations of the name of Ridley, young man?"

"No, sir," said Gideon, "I do not even know any one of the name?"

"Well, then, I must be out—quite out," said Abel. "For many and many a long year have I bothered myself about a mysterious tale of our country, and seeing you standing there, just by the candle so—don't move, pray, for a moment," said the old man, and his face was agitated by a strong emotion; "I think I see him again, and *her*. Poor creature!—poor creature!—sad story!—strange story!"

"What are you talking of, Abel?" said Mr. Prior, struck with the melancholy earnestness of his eye, which continued fixed upon Gideon.

"Oh, dear me! of times long gone by, and of those who are in their graves by this time, and of one whom that gentleman certainly is very like,—who, well-a-day, was my pupil, just as *he* may be yours, and who is now one of the greatest men in the united kingdoms."

Gideon moved a little way out of the light, and

came and sat down behind Mr. Prior. He was breathing thick and hard, and his hand trembled as he rested it upon his friend's arm.

Mr. Prior just turned round, and gave him a look, as much as to say, "Have patience, I'll question him for you."

"So you had the great Lord Avonmore for *your* pupil, Abel, eh? I wonder by this time you have not had the wit to get yourself made a bishop."

"I expect no favours from *him*," said Abel, shortly.

"Why not?—I don't see why not," Prior said, persisting in his endeavour to elicit something more. "It seems to me quite according to the common course of things, that the tutor of a great man should be made a bishop; and he had every reason, I believe, to be grateful to you."

"More than I had to be to him," said Abel. "Don't let us talk of him any more. It's a horrid tale—that is to say, I believe it 's a horrid tale, for I never could make it out how it was—I had only all sorts of black suspicions. But as

one has heard that the grave will give up its dead, and the mouldering bones will rise up from the earth where they have been hidden for scores of years, to confound and convict the murderer; and as there have been visions and apparitions which have carried home the sense of his abominable crimes to the hardened and heartless ravisher, — I declare, when I saw that young gentleman with his beautiful young face, standing there just in the light of the candle, I had such a set of strange thoughts, just as if a curtain had been hanging before my eyes, through which I seemed to see strange shapes and shadows gliding about and playing out the play; and then, all at once, it was drawn up, and I saw quite plain how it really was. But it's all nonsense, and I am a fool of the eye—a fool, as I have ever been!" he added, with a sigh. "Let us talk of other things."

"If it gives you pain, certainly," said Mr. Prior; "but if you are a fool of the eye, I am a slave of curiosity; I like to hear stories of real life; no romances can come up to some of them. And then this Lord Avonmore belongs to history:

one likes, you know, to hear what these giants of the earth were in their youth."

"Why, this one was, I verily believe, as unprincipled and profligate a young fellow, as selfish and hard-hearted a being, as ever existed; but somehow he had a way with him — those clever dogs always have; one could not help liking him, and trusting him too far, too. I liked him, fool as I was, excessively; I was so proud of him, and took such delight in instructing him and all that, that though I knew all the time, saw as plain as I do the nose in your face what sort of a fellow he really was at heart, I wouldn't think it — I hoped better of him, you see; and besides, nothing ever was *proved* against him: all surmise, mere surmise upon my part.

"My gracious! young gentleman!" starting back in his chair, as Gideon, with a look of eagerness peculiarly his own, again bent forward into the light. "I never *did* see any thing like it. Where *did* you come from?"

"From Mordaunt Hall," said Mr. Prior, "the seat of Charles Mordaunt, Esq. That is where Gideon comes from."

"And he's one of the Mordaunts? Well, well, the Mordaunts never married among the Ridleys, for there were no such things as Ridleys a few years ago; and this man is an only child. I beg your pardon, young gentleman, for being foolish; but, my goodness!" almost shuddering, "it's quite shocking! you've a look of *both*. Mercy upon me, if ever I did see such a strange likeness before! There, just there—just as he sits, Prior! Poor things, poor things! Fool that I was—fool that I am!" and the tears stood again in poor Abel's eyes.

"It is too painful to talk about," said good Mrs. Prior; "I am sure, sir, if you please, we had better drop the subject. Don't, William! it hurts Mr. Abel, I see."

Gideon had again withdrawn himself behind Mr. Prior's chair. He heard him panting for breath.

"Quite right, my dear mother! Abel, I shall ask for the story some other time; but I cannot give up the hearing it. This Lord Avonmore has the eyes of the world upon him. One cannot help being curious."

"Oh, it's no *story!*—there's nothing in it," said Abel, like many of his communicative sort, incapable of withholding what he had to relate, and still more incapable as his listeners seemed inclined to defer the relation to another time. These people with the infirmity of a too loosely hung tongue never can resist the temptation of speaking at the moment—the childish impatience to tell their tale.

"Oh, it's no *story*, if you expect that! There was nothing in it, perhaps, only I know many a sore, sorrowing night it has cost me. The old man was the best friend I ever had, or shall have; he had his peculiarities, and he'd got some notions into his head which shocked our worthy people at Kettlewell, so he fell altogether to my share. Pooh! pooh! they didn't and couldn't understand him. Well, well, I loved him as the apple of my eye—that's enough!"

"The old man?"

"That was the poor girl's father. He was full of crotchets, and he'd brought her up quite in a way of his own. But *I* never saw such another; to my mind she was the finest girl in all that part

of the country. I don't know—I don't pretend to be a judge of these things. And then she had such a way with her! I think I see her now coming down with that nice, cheerful, open look of hers, to greet me when I 've come in to drink tea, and always some pleasant joke or other. I was a joker from my youth up — I 've left it off now, but I never could abide a wise, solemn face; yet, though, one was as wise as the great king of Jerusalem himself, and the other quite worthy to be his daughter! La, sir! she understood Greek, and Latin, and mathematics, and what not. They were so cheerful and pleasant, and so happy together, and loved each other so; and then the garden was the prettiest thing in the world!"

Thus he rambled on, lost in the labyrinth of those recollections so touching and so dear to his good old heart.

"Well, and the present Lord Avonmore was——," put in Mr. Prior, to recall his wandering thoughts.

"My pupil, didn't I say? He came down to me to finish his education, which wanted a sort of winding up, as we may say; for he had been

idle and dissipated at the University, reading by fits like a ravenous book-wolf, and at others flinging his books over the moon, and away to hunt like the Wild Huntsman they tell of in the Black Forest. . . . My goodness! young gentleman! if you keep putting your head forward in that way, you 'll drive me out of the room. He 'd a way of just putting his head forward so, when he was very earnest and intent upon something; for, in spite of his volatility and changeableness, and so on, as people thought, there was a great solidity at the bottom of his character. It 's a great pity he was not a better man."

Gideon now fairly drew back behind Mr. Prior, and, resting his arm on the back of his chair, leaned his head upon it, and effectually hid his face, whilst he devoured every word.

"He had that in him — I always thought and still think—which was intended to make a better man; but he had run into the spirit of his age, and was a scoffer at religion — a daring, blasphemous scoffer. To hear how he would talk in his more familiar moments! He could be as witty, when he chose, as Voltaire himself; and it

seemed to be his greatest pleasure to exercise his wit upon what other people held most sacred. I used to try to argue the matter with him, but it was useless; he seemed to take it for granted that the whole thing was beneath argument; and when he found out that I had really the feelings of a Christian, he seemed to take, I must say, a very ill-natured pleasure in turning all my dearest opinions into ridicule, and overwhelming me by sarcasms which I was quite unable to parry."

"They were evil times those," remarked Mr. Prior.

"Aye, aye, bad indeed — bad indeed! I don't think his heart, as I said, would have been altogether so hard if he had had better principles; but his idea was that there was nothing in existence worthy to be the aim of a rational, strong-minded man — a man divested of childish prejudice, as his phrase was — but pleasure and ambition, enjoyment and success. And I believe nothing hardens the heart like the systematic pursuit of pleasure as an end. At least, though there were glimpses of better feeling — yes, there were, now and then, now and then — his heart

was, I verily believe, upon the whole, as hard as the nether millstone."

"Your remark is most just," said Mr. Prior, seriously; "pray go on! the subject, as you treat it, interests me exceedingly."

He heard Gideon's heaving chest behind him, but Gideon moved not.

"You know what a beautiful part of the country I live in, Prior, and what a walker I am—a pedestrian in grain. This young fellow, so finely formed, with his elastic muscles and vigorous health, could not exist without exercise; and then he was quite an enthusiast about fine scenery—such genuine delight he took in it, one should have thought it would have softened a man's heart, but it didn't his. It was a sensuous pleasure in mere beauty after all; there was not that in him to look about and search for a Giver; he had no yearnings of gratitude, Prior.—The mountain in its sublimity, the valley in its loveliness, the sun in his glory, or all the beauties of the wide starry vault, never lifted up his heart to seek for the Almighty Power from whence all this had come! He didn't seem to want a *moral*

agent; he did not seem to crave to *love;* he was lost in matter—matter—mere matter all! He denied and disbelieved the spiritual. This beautiful world was, after all, but as a picture hung up in a rich man's dining-room; there was no living soul behind it—no life—dead matter—dead matter! Oh the worse than Egyptian darkness of such a mind!"

Mrs. Prior, thinking more of her little supper, which must be spoiling, than of this delineation of mind, was just now about to rise with a somewhat impatient look from her chair, but her son glanced at her, and she sat down again; and Abel, after having sat, thrown back in his chair, musing for a few seconds, thus pursued the current of his thoughts, exactly as Mr. Prior, who knew this singular being well, hoped and expected that he would if left undisturbed.

"Do you remember me taking you a walk down a deep savage valley, all surrounded by rocks in their primeval bareness, where the brown horror of the scene was unrelieved except by a few straggling fir and beech trees, and then bringing you out where a gleaming sunset was

glowing over the fine extensive scene of a rich varied plain?"

"The foreground was a purple heath," said Mr. Prior, "in the full richness of its autumn colours; beyond lay a champaign of woods and spires and gleaming meads. It was a beautiful, beautiful scene!"

"We walked home over the heath, and we came by a small cultivated bit that had been inclosed out of the middle of it, you remember?"

"I remember it as a scene of the most mournful vegetable desolation. The little paling was all overrun with wild creepers, and roses, and weeds, and brambles, tangled together, and toppling over one another. The area within was filled with rank grass, thistles, and docks, with shrubs and flowers of various sorts; rose-trees, and holy-oaks, and campanulas, and marygolds, growing quite wild. There were many fruit-trees standing about, but the boughs were torn down and broken, where the boys, who had made various inroads through the ruined fence, had climbed up to steal the apples and pears. The gate was locked, but there was little use in that. You

stood a moment there looking up at what might have been a walk some time or other, but now was nothing but filthy weeds; and gazing at a low-roofed cottage at the end, buried under moss and stone-crop, which had covered the thatch, and with all sorts of wild tangled creepers straggling over it. The door was shut, the windows all broken. I never saw such a picture of vegetable disorder, or so melancholy an air of desolation and decay."

"That's the very cottage. I took him one evening that very path I took you; and, as ill luck would have it, led him to that very garden, up through that gate, and to that very door; but, oh! how different it all was then from now!

"My old friend was a great philosopher, and his scientific acquirements, particularly in the abstruser parts of learning, perfectly astonishing; but, when he was not among his quadratures and sines, there was nothing he so loved as his garden. I mean of material objects; for, as for his daughter, he perfectly doted upon her.

"That desolate, ruined cottage, with its broken

panes, its moist roof, all covered with grass, moss, and stone-crop, and that garden now a mournful wilderness, was then, I can tell you, the very prettiest thing you ever saw in your life. That pretty little pastoral cottage, with its windows shining like diamonds, used to peep out at you as you came to the gate, winking, with its pretty eyes, at the sun from out the roses and virgin bower, and so forth, trained so pretty all about; and the garden was as neat — not a weed to be seen — only such loads, and loads of flowers — and the fruit-trees loaded with blossoms or fruit, as the case might be — and the white and red currants, as big as grapes! and cherries till the trees blushed again! And, when one was hot, and came in, out goes Miriam, and gathers one handsfuls — and down we used to sit, poor Feversham and I, on a bench by the door, picking strawberries and talking philosophy. Well — well — the devil got into Paradise. Some say he tempted Eve under the likeness of an angel of light — the innocent poor baby! How *could* he have had the heart to do it?"

"Well ——"

"Well — we went up that day — and one or two other days — and then I thought best not to take him any more; but, after that, we were never such good friends quite as we had been; and, instead of his long walks with me, he bought a horse, and went out by himself; and by-and-by he went away altogether—for he seemed tired of me and my readings — and that was the end — for I have not set eyes upon him, or heard a word from him, or of him since, except in the public prints—and they are full enough, to be sure, of him."

"And is that all?" cried Gideon, raising his head up.

"I never did in my life see anything so like! 'The hands are the hands of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob.' Why, that's just Miriam, now, when she would say, 'Is that all?' to one of my cock-and-bull stories. All?—no, I wish it had been all — but I am sick of the subject. Dear Prior, when *are* we to have the supper you promised us?"

"Mother, will you let us have our supper now? And so what became of your two friends

at the cottage, and what had they to do with Lord Avonmore?"

"With Ridley?—I don't know. After Ridley was gone, all I know is, that the poor girl's face got quite altered. She always looked as if she had been crying. Not that I ever saw her actually cry. No, I think she tried to be merrier than she was before—but it looked like trying—and at last her old father, Mr. Feversham——"

"Feversham!—F.!" exclaimed Gideon.

"Well, what of Feversham?—That was his name. Do you know any body of that name, young sir?"

"No—no—go on."

"Poor fellow! he began to droop, and droop; and, when I would come into his study, instead of papers all covered with rows of figures as long as your arm, he'd have a blank sheet before him, as if he had set down to his calculations and forgot them. At last he grew quite ill, and he went to London; and, about three weeks after, his daughter went away too, never saying where, and telling the old servant to wait there till they came back. They used to go away wandering

tours by themselves, nobody knew where. I happened to set off just at that time upon a tour with a pupil I had—on the Continent—and, when I came back, the cottage was shut up, and Peggy had taken the key, and left word where she was to be found when the master came home. He never did come home; and from that time to this I have heard nothing of my old friend or his daughter. Poor thing! if all the scandalous tales that got about were true, no wonder her cheeks were pale as a lily flower, and her eyes red. I saw Ridley's marriage in the papers, but that was after she was gone. But, they used to say, he was seen of an evening at the side of the garden hedge; and, in short, poor thing! I am afraid she was deluded and betrayed. There was, indeed, no doubt of it—scandal said—but people are so ill-natured. However, it's a sad, perplexing story, and makes me miserable whenever I think of it," said the good Abel, rising from his chair — " but how can one help thinking of it — so wonderfully like both as that young gentleman is? It quite takes one by surprise, like a flash of lightning."

CHAPTER VI.

"So should a life be lived that genius lifts
To higher duties than life asks from all;
So art, in blessed influences, should fall
Upon all hearts,—using its mighty gifts
Man's thoughts and common acts to purify."

W. C. Bennett.

Mr. Chandos sent Gideon to Oxford. He went to one of the smaller colleges—I forget which—was to take orders, and, the plan being, owing to circumstances not worth detailing, in some degree altered, to be provided for by a college living.

Time presses, and of his Oxford life there is little to relate. He worked hard—too hard for his strength—and he obtained every distinction which the University could bestow. Double-first class—prize essay—prize poem.

His name became celebrated beyond the pre-

cincts of the University. The name of the wonderfully clever young man of that year reached even to London.

Mr. Chandos was gratified, and his interest now really excited. It was impossible to feel indifferent to the brilliant success of the young man to whose opportunities for achieving such success he had so largely contributed. He had not seen him since the Christmas spent together at Mordaunt Hall. He really had a curiosity to see him now. He wrote to ask him to spend a fortnight at Elmwood Park, after taking his degree,—in order, said the letter, that he (Mr. Chandos) might renew his personal acquaintance with one who had distinguished himself so much, and given such high satisfaction to all those who were interested about him.

The invitation was accepted, and in July of that year on which he completed his twenty-first, Gideon arrived at the house of his patron.

There was no one in the house at the time but Lucilla, Celia, and the son of Sir Philip Scrope, lately dead, who had inherited his father's estate and his father's abilities. He was a young

man of considerable accomplishments and talents, and one of those regarded by a hopeful generation, looking round with a sort of anxious desire to find some rising of genius in the general scarcity at that time of such an article, as the most promising young man of his age.

He had been some years in Parliament, and was a brilliant and popular speaker; handled questions of political economy with even more than the usual decision of tone proper to the subject; ridiculed the wisdom of our ancestors, whom he compared to ourselves in our childhood (a plausible sophism — the wisdom of our ancestors meaning that portion of their views, or principles of action, which the experience of subsequent generations has confirmed and sanctified); was the advocate of every liberal sentiment and of progress in all its forms. He was, however, at the same time, of somewhat haughty and somewhat exclusive temper as the possessor of a large family estate and of an ancient historic name — which possessions he estimated at their full value. He had a handsome person, a fluent speech, the manners of a finished man of the

world, excellent principles, and an unblemished reputation for correct conduct in every way.

Mr. Chandos loved him with perhaps an undue partiality, for which he must be forgiven—it was for his father's sake. Having no son of his own, the son of his friend had stood to him in some measure in that relation. He had taken interest in all his school and University successes as a boy and as a youth, and saw the prizes with which Philip was sure to return loaded with almost as much pleasure as his father.

He gloried in the distinction he had acquired as a man; rejoiced in the correctness of his conduct and the regularity of his habits, and shared in all the father's pride in this accomplished son. Never was there a better son. Sir Philip would say to his friend, with glistening eyes, "He is every thing I could wish."

And Mr. Chandos would rejoice with him as only a true friend rejoices—without envy or abatement.

He might have envied, for he had no son to attain to these honourable distinctions; but there was little virtue in his freedom from this mean

passion, for he felt inclined to envy no creature upon earth—he had his daughter.

She was now eighteen, and had attained to—what may be called in a creature so educated and accomplished—her perfection. And never, never was there a sweeter pattern of that often not very interesting attribute—never type more pure, more lovely, and more perfect, of what eighteen ought to be.

She was still very small, of almost childlike proportions, but formed with a symmetry and delicacy that was in itself beauty. Her slender, white arms; her feet, which seemed formed to have sustained a fairy, when the blade did not bend beneath her step; her small head; her face delicately tinted with the very softest rose colour; her eyes so full of feeling and intelligence; that bewitching, playful mouth, and those winning manners, formed the delightful exterior under which was lodged a heart worth all the rest put together. Abilities and intelligence of the first order were improved by every thing which the sedulous education bestowed upon her could bestow. A temper

the most sweet and generous was united to a gaiety and cheerfulness of spirit which gladdened every one who approached her.

Thus gifted, Celia — or Kitty, as her doting father still loved to call her himself, though he expected the more formal name to be adopted by others — was the welcome guest of every family near, the star of every circle, the most admired, and (rare destiny!) the best beloved of all the country round.

Every body loved her. She bore her faculties so meekly, was so easy, so unaffected, so unassuming, so gentle, so playful, and so sincerely good. Her countenance was like the diffusion of light when she entered a drawing-room; it beamed with sweetness, and kindness, and intelligence; and yet she had that rare perfection, which waits only upon those as truly without selfishness or egotism as herself, that, whilst triumphing over all — acknowledged as the one indisputably most charming among any charmers — no one felt eclipsed in her presence. It seemed as if she diffused the enchantments she possessed. Every one was happier

and more self-complacent where Miss Chandos was.

Mr. Chandos reaped the reward of all his cares, and felt compensated for every pain and disappointment of his life in the possession of this sweet girl; and he and his friend rejoiced and sympathised together, for old Sir Philip was almost as fond and as proud of her as her father.

It was natural—it was inevitable—where two estates lay contiguous, where the proprietors were attached friends, where one had an only son and the other an only daughter, where both felt their whole of earthly happiness involved—I was going to say invested—in these children; where Mr. Chandos especially must dread a separation from his daughter by some possible marriage with a distant stranger as the greatest of possible evils,—it was natural that the parents should wish the friendship that subsisted between themselves to be perpetuated in their children, and a union take place which should cement the tie that bound them altogether.

Sir Philip the younger was a good deal absorbed with politics, and would not have found much leisure to fall in love with any one else, even if he had felt the inclination, but he never had; he had taste and sense enough fully to estimate the loveliness of Miss Chandos, and from a boy he had liked Kitty better than any one else, and shewed his boyish preference upon every occasion. She had been so accustomed to this homage, and to be in a manner appropriated by him—she knew her father esteemed and loved him so much, his father seemed so pleased and happy when they were together, that she had got into the habit of feeling that there was a peculiar link uniting them.

Old Sir Philip meantime petted her, and treated her with all the affection and consideration due to his future daughter-in-law; nothing, however, had positively yet been said. Mr. Chandos had openly declared his resolution not to part with his daughter before she should reach her eighteenth year, and had made it well understood that he should feel considerable displeasure if any one presumed to disturb the serenity of her mind

by addressing her upon the subject before that period arrived; so that Philip and his father, with impatience equal at least to that of his son, awaited the arrival of that birthday which was to emancipate them from this tantalising silence. Poor old man! he did not live to rejoice in the fruition of his wishes: two days before his dear girl's birthday, he was suddenly carried off. But he departed in possession of his son's full confidence; and among his last words he said that he died happy, leaving his beloved son to find consolation by the side of one who would be still dearer to him than they had been to each other —one who would adorn and dignify the station to which Philip was called upon to succeed.

Visions of peaceful happiness for these children, almost equally dear, gladdened the mild, benevolent eye of Sir Philip, as the dim veil of death drew slowly over and closed the picture.

The death of his father, and the consequent arrangements, had delayed the declaration of his passion, and that formal request for the honour of his daughter's hand which Mr. Chandos knew would ensue. The young man had been unre-

mitting in his attendance in parliament, too. However, now parliament was up; and instead of going to his desolate home, he was come to spend the first month of the recess at Elmwood Park.

He had been domiciled in the house a few days before the arrival of Gideon, but nothing as yet had passed between the two young people that was decisive. Mr. Chandos waited with patience, quite satisfied when he saw them riding together, gardening together, reading together, playing and singing together; for Celia played, whilst Sir Philip, who had a very fine voice, sang.

His attentions were so unobtrusive and in such good taste, his affection so calm, though so steady and sincere, that she never felt alarmed, or confused, or hurried, and she treated him with the most endearing simplicity and cordiality. Mr. Chandos was pleased more than can be expressed; his taste, his judgment, his affection, and even the little egotism in his love for his daughter, were at once satisfied.

Celia was not entirely absorbed, as young

ladies often are, with a handsome, accomplished suitor; she loved her father as devotedly as she had ever done, and shewed the same delight, amounting almost to a preference, for his company. She was serene and happy.

Lucilla was as well pleased as the rest. To tell the truth, in secret, I believe, she thought Sir Philip quite of the proper sort to make a favourite for Mr. Chandos—so gentlemanlike, so *rangé*, so quiet, so accomplished, so fond of reading, so full of information, so right, so good. Lucilla loved nothing that was not brilliant: all the excellent qualities in the world were dross to her if they were not shining.

Now Sir Philip was rather a distinguished than a shining character—more valued for the solidity of his parts, for his accuracy and extent of information, and for that very valuable thing meant by the phrase "habits of business," than for the vehemence of his eloquence, or his power of magnetising other men by his influence.

He was not enthusiastic enough in any thing for Lucilla's taste; besides, he was the son of Sir Philip Scrope, whom she always called an

old bore, and, as she said, the very facsimile of him. Nevertheless, to see her daughter so unexceptionably married was as pleasant to her as it would have been to other mothers; and she thought, justly enough, that if her daughter was pleased with her choice, it signified very little whether the man was particularly to her own taste or not.

Still she could not refrain from being a little satirical and ill-natured to him at times, because he was Mr. Chandos's favourite, and the son of Mr. Chandos's particular friend. It seemed as if the only thing in which Lucilla was consistent was in this determined opposition, upon all occasions, to her husband's taste and feelings. There seemed to be an inveterate prejudice against his views, whatever they might be; he had only to make his ideas understood, to be contradicted in them.

Her predilection in favour of Gideon had continued much for this reason. It was plain Mr. Chandos, much as he praised his conduct, was still scarcely inclined to do him justice; she therefore eagerly strove to do him more.

She anticipated his arrival with a sort of strange, unaccountable pleasure; and already, in her own mind, constituted the brilliant young man, crowned with University honours, as a sort of rival to the ever-perfect Sir Philip, of whose honours and good qualities she was so heartily tired.

Lucilla was alone in the drawing-room when Gideon was ushered in. He was so much grown and improved that she scarcely knew him again. He had attained that just height which gives grace and dignity, without destroying our impression of that perfect activity and aptitude for exertion which taller, and what are sometimes called finer figures, want. His face was full of expression, and his beauty of the most intellectual character; his eyes, replete with varied meaning, seemed capable of displaying the deepest agonies of passion or the most brilliant flashes of intellect; his gestures were energetic and manly, yet softened and mellowed by the intense sensibility of his heart. There was an indescribable softness

in his voice and manners, which completed the charm of his appearance.

It was not good company that had fashioned, though habits of good company had just smoothed down and given the last finish to the picture. His external accomplishments were the natural result of the very rare internal gifts with which Nature had endowed him, and which not all the disadvantages of his situation could obscure. Had he possessed only second-rate abilities, there is little doubt he would never have emerged from the cloud which obscured him; but abilities first-rate, as were his, have only to be known to command the admiration and respect of mankind. Any such boy or young man, at any public school or university, would have been *fêted* and honoured, though he had not a social distinction in the world.

So pleasing as Gideon was, and with his manners so polished, and the *tone* derived from Mordaunt Hall so perfectly *sans reproche*, he had, even though the denizen of a small college, found himself among those rare exceptions who are admitted to companionship by the exclusives

of the higher ones. As he never sought, but rather shunned their wine and boating parties, he was the more desired at them. Nothing was quite complete where Jones did not make one.

His friends had, as I said, by the substitution of one letter for another, found for the nameless a name which seemed too common for it to be possible to excite attention or inquiry.

His success had given him confidence in himself and faith in his own powers, though without the slightest tincture of arrogance or conceit. It had merely balanced, as I may say, the weight of other mortifications, and spared him any temptation towards that sort of jealous self-assertion which was the defect of his character. His association with young men of the first rank had added that perfect ease and that agreeable quietness to his manners, which it is so difficult for men of strong passions, acute sensibility, and with the temperament of genius without much converse with the world, to attain.

Lucilla was perfectly enchanted with his address as he approached her, and, rising to meet him, gave him her hand with a winning cordiality

which made the conquest of his heart in a moment. He had never forgotten her partial spoiling in the days of former suffering; and, whether he ought to have been grateful or not to those who had been more anxious to discipline than to indulge him, it is certain his heart yearned, to the fair champion who had fought his battles with so much eagerness.

Lucilla had not lost any portion of her charms. The matured woman was as handsome as the young one had been; her figure still preserved all its elasticity and spirit, and her eyes were as brilliant and her countenance as sparkling as ever. No young man likes any one the less for being handsome, and Gideon felt more particular pleasure in so kind a reception from this beautiful woman.

They chatted a little, and then she said every body was gone up to dress, she believed, and she would shew him herself to his room. So she took him up a splendid flight of stairs, and into a large sort of central room, or gallery, into which the several guest-chambers opened; and, ushering him into one of the best of these, de-

sired he would ring for what he wanted, adding that as he had no valet of his own, she had committed him to the attendance of her own footman.

And, so saying, away she went, equally delighted with her guest and with herself; and, according to the old way with her, resolved to be ten times kinder, because she was in such good-humour with herself for having been already so good-natured and kind.

She did not forget, too, the expression of those beautiful eyes of his. She saw that he felt and appreciated her delicate care in making him sensible that she considered him as a guest entitled to equal attention with any one else in the house.

Gideon, dressed with all that gentlemanlike propriety which he had acquired at that university —the *arb. eleg.* of youthful England—descended to dinner without any of that trepidation which a few years before would have made him so miserable. In communication with the world in general, the contradictions in his fate had been lost in the blaze of his extraordinary success. No one at Oxford cared to inquire whether this highly-distinguished young man, and general

favourite, was exactly this or that. It was not on account of his "social position" that he was admitted into the society of the exclusives, but on account of his personal merits, his agreeable manners, and his commanding talents. It signified not in the least after this who or whence he was.

He had been so accustomed to be thus received in society that he had become habituated to it, and he forgot, like others, the peculiar mortifications of his situation. Received with a cordiality and urbanity on all sides proportioned to his individual merits, he became accustomed to rely upon those merits for general acceptance, and his manners had thus acquired an ease and self-possession, which, as it was adorned with a most charming modesty, rendered him pleasing to every one.

His spirit within, too, was calm and serene as his outer manner was composed and easy. He had planted the foundation of his character upon a rock. From the time of that interesting conversation with Calantha, a new epoch had commenced in his internal life. He had, by a mighty effort of his will, brought his internal and external life at length into harmony. He had steadily looked his situation in the face and considered it in all its bearings; he had endeavoured

well to understand what he was to expect from others, and for how much he must rely alone upon himself. He had ceased to strive with, he had submitted at once bravely to, his fate; had accepted it in faith, had cast himself for support upon the orphan's Friend, and, grateful for all the kindness he had received from those around him, murmured no longer because it was not greater than it could be expected to be —greater than conflicting circumstances would admit of its being. He appreciated those inevitable prejudices of opinion which had obliged, as it were, Calantha and Mr. Chandos to adopt with regard to him a course of conduct from which so many pains and mortifications to his pride and spirit had arisen. He had the justice and the candour to admit the difficulty of the task, and the gratitude heartily to appreciate what had been done.

But he felt that, if he intended to break from that obscurity, to emerge from which was to a spirit like his almost a necessary condition of existence, it must be through his own unassisted efforts. He had long seen this distinctly, and he had acted upon this persuasion. We have seen how he had laboured at Oxford, and what had been the result; and he seemed about to realise the better half of Calantha's alternative, and to

be destined to shew how great is the power of a brave determination in triumphing over the strongest disadvantages.

Lucilla, Mr. Chandos, and Celia, were already in the drawing-room when he came down.

His hand no longer shook, as of old, when he laid it upon the lock of the door; he no longer retreated, anxious about his appearance, to give a last pull to his coat-sleeves or last adjustment to his hair. He felt emotion, it is true, at the idea of once again meeting Mr. Chandos, and a strange fluttering at the heart when he thought of his daughter; but there was no bashful shyness, none of that nervous return upon self, which, to the man of susceptibility, unaccustomed to the world, is so formidable and distressing a feeling.

He opened the door and came in, and went up to Mr. Chandos and shook hands with him, with such a charming mixture of respect, sensibility, and modest ease, that Mr. Chandos himself thought him the most pleasing young man he had for a very long time seen. Then he turned to Celia, who rose and offered him her hand, looking down as she did so; but the next moment, casting up her eyes with an expression at once so sweet, kind, and engaging, that all the feelings of years long gone by rushed, as it were, into his heart,

and he could scarcely falter forth a few words of reply to her welcome.

She was sitting opposite to her father, so that Gideon had his back turned towards Mr. Chandos while this little greeting was going on. No one but herself could perceive that the hand which held hers trembled, or remark the glow which spread over his face in an instant, and the next as rapidly subsided. He went and sat down by Lucilla, and Mr. Chandos entered immediately into conversation with him. He found him in conversation easy and agreeable, and fully possessed of that charm which arises from a highly cultivated mind inadvertently displayed without effort or pedantry.

There is something even in the most trivial conversation of a very clever and highly educated man which betrays the superiority of the speaker. This was peculiarly the case with Gideon. I never knew any one whose conversation was more fascinating. You could not easily detect where the charm was; but his voice was like the lute of Apollo, and his touch seemed to turn every subject into gold. It is a pretty fable that of the girl whose lips dropped pearls and diamonds as she spoke. Some people possess that fairy gift.

Celia sat by, listening.

She did not, as usual, enter into the conversa-

tion. She seemed less at ease than ordinary. She had, indeed, heard so much of Gideon's talents and success that she had ceased altogether to regard him as an object of compassionate interest. She looked upon him now as one formed to command universal admiration. She even felt a little afraid of him, I believe—a rare feeling with her, for she was so simple, so free from thought of herself, and so accustomed to company, that she scarcely knew what it was to feel nervous or ill at ease.

At length her mother addressed her, and then she had to speak; and her voice sounded to his ears like charmed music, and he could now venture to turn round and look at her again.

He was not deceived by those too fond and partial eyes when they represented her as surpassingly lovely.

They sat there waiting for Sir Philip, who at last made his appearance, looking excessively elegant and *comme-il-faut* in dress and address. Mr. Chandos introduced him to Mr. Gideon Jones, "whose name, I am sure, cannot be unknown to you, though university honours do not usually excite much attention in London."

Sir Philip, in fact, had either not heard of him, or else had forgotten that he had; his life was occupied by far too important interests to afford time for attention to events of this description.

He made a slight bow, to which Gideon responded coldly enough; and then, taking his seat close by Celia, engaged her immediately in conversation.

He had a vast deal to tell her, for he had come down from London that day after a stay of eight-and-forty hours or so. He had to give her the earliest intelligence with regard to political movements of importance, then in agitation, in which he took the deepest interest; and concluded that, for his sake, she would do so too; and as she sat there, with a little pet-dog, which she had taken up, lying upon her knee, he sat so as almost to hide her from the view of others, talking earnestly, and patting and stroking her dog, and looking up into her eyes with all the privilege of acknowledged intimacy.

While poor Gideon,—whose mind was far from the subject in discussion,—was obliged to sit in sad civility, endeavouring to strain and force himself to attend to what Mr. and Mrs. Chandos were saying.

Dinner was announced, and they all got up. Sir Philip took out Mrs. Chandos, Mr. Chandos led his daughter, Gideon followed in the rear. At dinner Miss Chandos sat between Sir Philip and her father, Sir Philip being placed beside Mrs. Chandos; Gideon had one whole side of the large table to himself.

Sir Philip talked long and—as Gideon thought in his impatience—prosily enough of what was going on in the political world, of foreign relations, state of trade, the last election petition, the balance of parties, &c. &c.; but Mr. Chandos seemed to take too much interest in what he was saying to think him tedious, and Celia listened, and from time to time took part in a conversation which was interrupted now and then by the flashes of Lucilla's wit, or rather satire, breaking like lightning through what Gideon thought the heavy fog of Sir Philip's discourse.

The subject-matters in discussion were so foreign to all the ideas with which his head was filled, that no wonder he felt left out—that disagreeable, awkward feeling, which, like some evil enchantment, gradually gathers over a man's spirits till his tongue seems to cleave to the roof of his mouth, and he begins to wonder that he had ever an idea in his head.

Lucilla, at last, seemed to lose patience, and to be tired of her part of humble listener, only broken by the afore-mentioned occasional flashes.

She did not pique herself upon being particularly well bred, and she took little pains to disguise the yawn with which she pushed a plate of grapes to Gideon, and asked him to taste the green ones.

"The sort came from my father's," she said. "I like them because they are from Mordaunt Hall. Oh, dear! Sir Philip, will that petition never be settled, and the members turned out or turned in? I am sure I don't care which, so that one were well done with it."

"You forget, dear madam, that a great constitutional principle is in question. Let me explain. You take interest, Miss Chandos, in it, I am sure;—it is this. The point is curious and without precedent. Lord Avonmore once made a splendid speech in illustration of the subject; but his last, upon the C—— negotiation, beat every former effort; it was by far the most masterly upon our side of the question; his argument, Mr. Chandos, may thus be briefly stated ——"

Gideon was aroused. Ever since the conversation with Mr. Abel, he had never been able to hear that name mentioned without interest and emotion.

"Oh, Lord Avonmore!" interrupted Lucilla; "let us hear what he said about that or any thing. He's by far the greatest man of his day—a really great man, in my opinion. Did you ever see him, Mr. Jones?"

"No, madam, never."

"You should see him, or rather hear him speak. Do you know, he is, or was, one of the very hand-

somest men that ever was seen. I remember dancing with him when he was only plain Mr. Ridley. Oh, we were all madly in love with him in those days! And so provoked when he made up to that odious Lady Angelina; but there's one comfort, they hate one another like poison."

"It's a pity," said Mr. Chandos, gravely, "that Mr. Ridley's earlier proceedings damaged Lord Avonmore's character so much. It is not very often that the errors of a young man's early years are visited upon him in after-life. The world is apt to be much too lenient to the successful; but there was that about Ridley that it never could quite forgive. However, as Lord Avonmore, I believe, his private conduct has been unexceptionable. I don't know whether we can say quite so much of his public; what think you, Sir Philip?"

"The world, as usual, was envious of real superiority," cried Lucilla, "and could not forgive plain Mr. Ridley for being so much cleverer than any of the rest of them. Do you know Mr. Jones — if you don't, you soon will — there is nothing formal mediocrity fears and abhors like true genius."

"It was not for his genius, at least, that Mr. Ridley was disliked," said Mr. Chandos.

"Oh, no, to be sure! For the *aberrations* of

his genius, as people are please to call them. I'll be bound he was not one whit worse than any of the rest of you, only that his brilliant talents illustrated—held a candle to his faults. You can't conceive," turning to Gideon, "how jealous they all were of him—the men of his day—for he was the handsomest, wittiest, most bewitching creature. . . . I never shall forget him my first evening at Almack's — he looked —— well, I vow, he looked so like you just at this moment, Gideon, I declare you might pass for his son."

Every body's eyes involuntarily glanced at Gideon, who coloured, and looked pained.

Celia felt for him.

The history of his birth was no secret to her. She knew how sensitive he used to be upon that subject. She turned her eyes away, looked at her plate for a second or two, and then, feeling for his situation with all her usual good-nature and kindness, she addressed him across the table with some question which brought him at once into the conversation, and took pains to maintain the talk upon subjects in which he could join. Her good-nature was seconded by her father: it was now Gideon's turn to speak, and Sir Philip to be thrown into the shade.

He looked superciliously enough at the non-descript youth, who evidently possessed not the

least political connexion, and condescended not to take part in the chat upon literary subjects which now ensued for a short time.

I cannot say that Lucilla, though her favourite was brought into play by it, seemed to take any more pleasure in this discussion than she had in the one before. She hated solid conversation in any of its forms; she could not bear not to be always *en évidence* — the leader in all that was going on; and as her mind was very little stored with literature, she was soon left behind when matters of any high nature were under discussion.

So she made a signal to her daughter, and they left the dining-room and the three gentlemen together.

CHAPTER VII.

"Oh primal bloom—oh beauteous May—
Oh radiance of my youth,
When in the passion of my prime
I served the living truth—
Oh, for the full pulse of the time,
When in high purpose strong,
Life poured to battle for the good,
And smote to flight the strong."

W. C. Bennett.

"I wish to heaven, Kitty," she said, as they entered the drawing-room, "you would engage that admirer of yours to talk in mixed company of anything but his prosy politics. How *can* you, child, have the infinite good-nature to listen with that attentive look, while he is giving forth all his tiresome prose—*faisant des phrases?*—I declare you are an incomparably good-natured little thing, Kitty."

"Do I?—am I?" said she, innocently. "But I take rather an interest in politics, mamma; they seem to me to have to do with such important things—the happiness of such great quantities and quantities of people. Now, that about the

slave-sugar—oh, I could listen to a debate about it for hours, I believe! But I don't think Sir Philip quite right in what he said."

"My *dear* innocent!—what on earth!—Well, ring the bell, and let us have some coffee and sugar of some sort, dear child! Drawbacks and draw-ons—sugar this and sugar that! Well, if ever I was sick of a subject in my life it's that—such tiresome splitting of straws. Slaves there ever were, slaves there ever will be; and why, for goodness' sake, when we must take their cotton, we mayn't take their sugar, *does* pass me. Put sugar or sugar-candy enough into my cup, Kitty, I shall never know by the taste whether it comes from Cuba or Barbadoes. It's the only thing which Sir Philip doesn't bore one to death about—philanthropic prose—so pray do you spare me, child."

"Ah, mamma! you who are so good-natured, how can you pretend to be so hard-hearted?" said Celia, gently but seriously. "Poor creatures! if we would but think of what they suffer!"

"How tiresome you are, Kitty! You know, if there's a thing I abominate, it's those shocking descriptions of the 'miseries of the middle passage.' I declare they make one quite sick—one can hardly sleep in peace in one's bed when one hears of them; but people must and will have

their sugar, child, and what's the use of giving oneself all this useless pain about whether it's slave-sugar or not? I am sure *I* am not hard-hearted enough to bear it!"

"But, mamma, it is not useless pain, if it makes us think of these poor creatures, and strive to do something for them. I am sure Sir Philip is in earnest in what he says, and believes sincerely, that what they are going to do—letting us buy slave-sugar—will tend to abolish slavery from the earth. I wish I could think so too—it makes me quite unhappy!"

"My dear Kitty, go and cry for the moon! There now," going up to her own little work-table, and taking up a pamphlet, "if you are so fond of the subject here's Gideon's prize-poem, 'The Coromantin in Chains.' I love Gideon, but I can*not* read a poem, even of his, upon that hideous subject! Do me the favour, that's a good girl, to read it for me. Mark any thing that's particularly fine, and I'll get it up—it would hurt him if he thought one hadn't read his verses," added she, good-naturedly.

She took the book from her mother's hand, went to a distant window, and read it through with such unexpected emotion! It was, indeed, a splendid and most pathetic poem. The subject was finely treated; such a prize-poem had not, it

was generally acknowledged, appeared at Oxford since the "Palestine" of Heber.

She thought it wonderfully, surpassingly beautiful, and her eyes were glistening as Gideon entered the room. She had just laid it down.

He went up to her mother.

"I have just given Celia your prize-poem to read. I have not been able even to glance at it yet myself. You know she is an enthusiast about those poor blacks. Come, Kitty, come forwards—tell the young medallist what you think of his performance. What! In tears?"

It was an involuntary tribute, and she had turned away to the window to hide her emotion. She hastily passed her hand across her eyes, and looked up, they were still filled with a tender sadness. Poet! man!—he could have worshipped her as there she sat.

"It is such a beautiful poem," she began, in her sweet, gentle voice; "I think you feel so rightly, so justly, so kindly. I hope it will do good—I hope it will make others feel as it has made me."

He smiled.

"Do you think the influence of an Oxford prize-poem extends so far? A thing 'forgot as soon as done.' No, no!"

"What a pity!—what a pity! But every body seems to have read your prize-poem. I have

heard every body we know talking about it. I was so glad, Gideon," she said, sliding insensibly into her former habits of interest and intimacy; "and papa was so pleased, and dear Calantha! What pleasure it must give you to afford such high gratification to Calantha!"

"Was she gratified?—it does, indeed!"

"Would you like to see her letter to me? I kept it because I thought you would like to see it; and then we were all so glad here that every thing connected with this *grand* event became dear. I little thought that Christmas when we were altogether at Mordaunt Hall that you were to become such a great man, Gideon," said she, smiling with all her own radiant sweetness, as she turned her eyes upon him.

The ice had dissolved. Her father and Sir Philip engaged in discussion over their wine, she was, though she never remarked it once to herself, restored by their absence to her former ease and intimacy. She had never taken account with herself about this feeling as regarded her father, never, indeed, observed how differently she felt upon this subject when in the presence of her mother only. It had always been so from a child; her father's presence was a sort of restraint when Gideon was there; she knew not why, and never asked herself. It was, perhaps, an appre-

hension of exciting those little intimations of displeasure which used to give such pain to Gideon, and which almost always, unluckily, seemed to be drawn forth when she was talking to him.

These things made her feel shy and uncomfortable—she could not help it: she could not talk so freely and easily to Gideon before her father.

"That you were to become such a great man," said she, and smiled.

"A great man!—a poor apology for a great man," said he, shaking his head. "Dear Miss Chandos, you put me in mind of the senior wrangler, who thought the attention of the whole Opera-house was directed towards him. Believe me, nothing sooner fades into oblivion than class honours and prize-poems. It is extremely kind of my friends to take so much interest in them, but a man must do a good deal more than that if he arrives at distinction in the world in general."

"Well, you will be a popular preacher," said Lucilla, "that will be the next thing. With your eloquence, we shall have you invited to preach all the sermons for all the missionaries in the country. I dare say he will end by being a bishop, Kitty, in spite of your father's predictions to the contrary."

"A bishop I shall never be, for I am not going to take orders."

"Not to take orders!" cried both at once, Celia with an accent of alarm, surprise, and pleasure, mingled, her mother with unfeigned astonishment.

"Not going to take orders!" repeated Lucilla; "my dear Gideon, what can you be saying? Why, Mr. Chandos, whose word, like the law of the Medes and Persians, once passed, altereth it not, has said it; and as for dear, pious Calantha, she'll be shrieking with horror if her little Samuel proves false to his vocation. Pooh! nonsense!" added Lucilla, who, after all, was no fool, "they've all settled it for you, and what on earth else can you do?"

"I don't know—I have not made up my mind."

"But your reason—but your reason. Why, the Church is a provision for you at once, places you unquestionably in the sphere of a gentleman. A college living makes you independent of every body; you have not even to *thank* for it. I don't wonder you have no particular fancy for the Church, but, all things considered, there is no help for it. What is your objection?"

"I should think it very wrong to take orders for any one of the reasons you mention, and, I confess, if I did enter it, it would be for no other.

My vocation lies another way, and I would rather starve—literally starve," said he, seriously, "than offer up at the shrine of God a prostituted service."

He glanced at Celia again, but she was not looking at him. Her eyes were fixed upon the carpet—she seemed to be meditating; she was apparently so lost in thought that he did not know whether she had even heard what he had said.

He bent down his head to her, and said in a low voice,—

"Do you think I am wrong?—I should be very, very sorry if *you* thought me wrong."

"Wrong!" lifting up her head, "oh, no! I honour you for it—not for disliking to take holy orders," said she, correcting herself, "but for refusing to do it from interested motives."

"But how, in the name of goodness, is he to get his bread? It's fine talking," said Lucilla, impatiently, "you will see what your father and Sir Philip say to such high-flown nonsense."

"Sir Philip! what has Sir Philip to do with me? Mr. Chandos, I believe, and I am sure, will yield to my reasons; *he* will never wish me to trifle with what I consider a sacred principle."

"You do him justice," said Celia, in a low voice.

"Won't he?" cried Lucilla; "I know no man

less inclined to listen to what he will call exaggerated romance than Mr. Chandos, and so you'll find, and so, I am sure, you think, Kitty, though you won't say so."

"My father," said she, gently, "always listens to reason, dear mamma."

"Perhaps so, but he will not call that reasonable, take my word for it. And, besides, people hate to have their plans disarranged, and that's his plan for Gideon. I know no one so wedded to his schemes as Mr. Chandos, and that you may find some day or other, my pretty Kitty."

Kitty blushed.

The blush was not lost upon her mother, but she only said, carelessly,—

"Well, we must all submit to destiny—we are the fools of fate, and so I am afraid, Master Gideon, you will find if you endeavour to contend with yours. You had better not be a bad boy, but accept a good fat college living, or they'll bind you apprentice to an attorney or to some villanous pen-driving trade. But it's no use talking; come, children, come to tea, for I want mine sadly."

Celia rose to take her seat at the tea-table.

It was like old times, all three sitting there so comfortably together, and they soon fell into that pleasant, easy conversation which they had en-

joyed the last time they met. He was happy, and as charming as happy. It was with him as it had been before. He again abandoned himself to the influence of a passion entirely hopeless, but with which he felt it vain to contend. His utter despair, the utter absence of the remotest expectation of success, in some degree seemed to answer the purpose of hope. He felt that he could enjoy the sweets of this enchantment in which he so speedily found himself again involved, without looking forward beyond the present hour. There were no alternatives for him. He loved her with the whole force of his soul, so he ever had, so he ever should love her,—and that would be all. Whilst he existed he should live dedicated to that one image, but he should live in vain —quite in vain. She should never even guess the strength of the feelings which bound him to her. He did not desire to excite her pity, and more was beyond the range of possibility.

Nothing he felt could tempt him to degrade himself in her eyes by the declaration of an attachment equally presumptuous and ridiculous. He would worship in silence and in secret, but neither time nor change should rob him of the image which had so long dwelt within that secret shrine of his inmost heart. He could and he would live for that.

It is astonishing with what moral strength this constancy, without a gleam of hope or expectation, had endowed him. That image, like some secret talisman, had been the source with him of energy, perseverance, and virtue. Every triumph he achieved had been in secret dedicated there. Every temptation he had resisted it was the idea of her purity and goodness which had strengthened and sublimed him. And now to have raised himself to that position by his genius which entitled him to sit by her, and talk to her upon terms of apparent equality, was reward almost great enough.

Fondly sitting by her, seeing and hearing her "softly speak and sweetly smile," unreproved, now at this very time, when they were grown to manhood and womanhood, the very time to which he had so long looked forward as the period finally, as it were, to sever them in the scale of society,—this was to have obtained a prize in value far above all that the world had to bestow.

It was nearly an hour before Sir Philip and Mr. Chandos entered, and then Sir Philip came to the tea-table, pushed his chair, without ceremony, between Celia and her mother, and, engaging her entirely, would scarcely allow time for any one to speak to her but himself. Soon Mr. Chandos took Gideon to another table to

shew him Sotheby's "Homer," just then come out, and to engage with him upon a comparison of various translations; and their conversation now began to sound so interesting to poor Celia, that it was all she could do to give proper attention to Sir Philip's talk, for which inattention she blamed herself much, and thought herself very ill-bred.

She never once thought—such was her gentleness and good nature—of voting him, as her mother did without ceremony, a most transcendent bore.

CHAPTER VIII.

"But sacred wisdom doth apply that good,
Which simple knowledge barely understood."
QUARLES.

GIDEON, after the few sentences upon the subject which had passed with the ladies in the drawing-room, felt it his duty to declare to Mr. Chandos, without loss of time, his objection to the profession which his friends had chosen for him.

He was taken by surprise when he heard Lucilla's uncompromising assertions with respect to Mr. Chandos's determination upon the subject. He did not, however, upon reflection, feel inclined to dispute their accuracy. In spite of all the obligations he lay under to Mr. Chandos, he did not —he could not love him. He thought him cold, and hard, and dictatorial, and, in spite of what his daughter had said, inclined to be unreasona-

ble. He resented too, in secret, this habit of treating him as a mere dependant on charity, who had no right to have a will of his own, but was to be disposed of, whatever his genius or inclination, just as best suited the convenience of those who had encumbered themselves with him.

The obligation he lay under to Mr. Chandos for his university education weighed sorely upon him, and yet he thought this obligation greatly diminished now he discovered, by Lucilla's speech, that the idea of his getting a college living, and thus being provided for without further trouble or expense to any one, had been uppermost in every one's mind. This, which really was a most rational and reasonable proceeding upon their parts, appeared to him, as coloured by Lucilla, and as he reviewed the subject in the watches of a restless night, as selfish and almost tyrannical. He could with difficulty bear the idea of being to them all a mere burden, to be shuffled off in the best way consistent with a decent performance of the duty they had imposed upon themselves. He found it difficult to be candid, impossible even to be just. Far more had he received than he was in the least degree entitled to expect—far more than he could ever repay, and yet he was not grateful as he ought to be, worse—worse,

he was alienated by the very means adopted to secure for him a respectable position in society.

A respectable position! When his soul was burning for distinction—was ardently springing, as it were, forward to that race of life, in which he instinctively felt born to outstrip every competitor, could he but once be started!

But what was he? He had no father, no mother, no brother, no sister, no family—not a relation in the world to take that pride—some call it selfish, I call it natural and instinctive—in the success of their relations, which leads to such important sacrifices to ensure the means of that success. What father, what mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, but would have strained to the utmost limit of possibility to open a career to such a young man as this? But he!—his very gifts were against him! The inheritance of genius, the ardent character, the extraordinary sensibility which had descended to him from parents so gifted as his, were to him the great misfortune.

He thought of the mother, driven to distraction and suicide by a despair of which it was easy to conjecture the cause. He took out, as often and often he had done before, that long, silken lock of hair. Then he recollected every word of Mr. Abel's relation. It had fastened upon

him. He had instinctively associated his own history with that melancholy tale. Not that he quite believed the individuals there described to have been actually his parents, but that he imagined the tale of his birth to have been much the same. In the treachery of Ridley he read the crime of his own father,—in the fate of Miriam, the sufferings of one who had wandered and despaired as his poor mother had done. He could never hear Lord Avonmore's name mentioned without the most painful emotions of indignation and impatience—he could not bear to recollect that the brilliant and successful statesman was the same man who had betrayed innocence, and perhaps given life to a being as ill-starred and more miserable than himself.

The indignation against his own father, whoever he might be, was only to be equalled by the intense pity he felt for his mother. The image of her dead as painted by Calantha—of her beauty, her helplessness, her despair, her suicide—acted upon his strong imagination and most feeling heart but too powerfully. He seemed to have known her and loved her; he panted to right her—to restore her memory and clear her fame—to meet his father, and force from him the true explanation of those two hearts, that star, and the rich ring, which was not a wedding-ring.

Such was the course his thoughts took this night. He began with Mr. Chandos and a college-living; he ended, as usual, with his father and mother. . . . .

Then he rose from his pillow, and endeavoured to dismiss these distracting thoughts; and he went to the window to cool his fevered head. And then again, as on that night when still but a boy, the image of Celia, in her sweetness and her loveliness, rose before him; and bitter, bitter regrets, regrets that, in spite of all his religion and all his hardly-acquired fortitude, it was vain to combat, would come over him; and, with them came again that repugnance, that strong dislike for a vocation which would consign him to seclusion, quiet, and his own reflections, when he knew too well that the most strenuous activity and the utmost dissipation of thought, or rather occupation — was almost absolutely necessary to preserve even his sanity of mind. Could he go with a heart full of ineffaceable regret and writhing under disappointed love, to undertake the calm, the peaceful, and most important work of guiding others — of patiently labouring to subdue the storms of those passions in others that were too strong for mastery within his own breast? Impossible! He would speak to Mr. Chandos the next morning. After what had fallen from Lucilla, he thought he had every reason to believe

that gentleman would be more disappointed and offended than he had expected, and would probably disclaim any further interference with his fate. What he should do, or whither turn, he knew not; but he had his hands and his head, and the means to employ them could not long be wanting to a determined man. Anything was better, he thought, and he thought justly, than presuming to enter into the service of his Creator with an alienated and unwilling heart. Anything better than to undertake those tender and sacred duties, without the dispositions which could alone render them valuable.

He walked long up and down his room, endeavouring to strengthen and compose his mind with those high thoughts and more sacred hopes in which, in his desolation of heart, he alone found real comfort. He was not alone, after all, in this wide vessel of the universe, solitary and single as he stood. There was a perfection, a greatness, a goodness existing, to which he bore a son's relation,—a relation which, through the ineffable mercy of his Creator, he was allowed to claim.

But love is strong in youth, and passion mighty and absorbing. He felt, poor fellow! in spite of all, so young as he was, that yearning for an earthly happiness, which is natural—shall I not say necessary?—at his age. Those higher

images failed to satisfy all the longings of his youthful, warm, loving, human heart.

Celia!—Kitty!—Miss Chandos!

The sweet child—the charming girl—the lovely, lovely woman! There she stood, beaming in her brightness! And those eyes, so full of kindness, was it not tenderness? Fearful—ecstatic—wild—extravagant thought! No—no—no!

He does not seem as yet to have been jealous of Sir Philip—the irritating, venomous pain of jealousy he was spared. He had seen nothing to lead him to believe that anything peculiarly tender existed in their relations, her countenance was so calm and his attentions so open and undisguised.

There was nothing, not a symptom to be discerned, of the passion which agitated himself. *His* love would have shewn itself in so different a way, had he been allowed to shew it at all, that his imagination upon this subject was at present undisturbed.

The next morning he introduced the subject of his meditations to Mr. Chandos.

They were walking up and down a terrace which terminated the flower-garden,—an elevated

terrace, bounded by a sunken fence, and commanding a fine view of the surrounding country. The broad, gravel walk, finished at one end by a circular building, in which were stone-seats, and upon the other shaded by two immense cedars, spreading wide their dark green, heavy, fan-like branches. This was a favourite walk with Mr. Chandos. Here he paced up and down, and here he meditated, indulging that disposition to reverie and melancholy which had so fatally interfered with the happiness and usefulness of his character.

Here he was walking this morning, but this morning indulging in no unpleasing meditations, for he was thinking of the marriage of his daughter and Sir Philip. It cannot exactly be said of this young man, that the more Mr. Chandos saw of him the more he liked him; he rather resolved to do it, than really did very much like him, for, with a taste so correct and delicate as his own, Sir Philip's defects could not pass unobserved; but he thought him, as he really was, an excellent person, devoted to his duties, with considerable powers of mind. And then his position, his large estate, close by his own, his ancient family, his unblemished reputation — Where could he bestow his Kitty more safely?— and the contiguity—from the terrace upon which

he stood, he looked over the tufted woods of Chilham Park—his daughter would scarcely leave him.

Gideon came through the flower-garden, and, after lingering a little among the parterres, looking at this geranium and that, and raising, from time to time, the head of a dropping carnation here and there, he made his way to the terrace. He could not venture to interrupt Mr. Chandos by addressing him first; but he leaned over the parapet of the wall, watching the widely-extended view of tufted woods, and lawn, and church-steeple, and mere, and mountain, now melting into the haze of a summer day.

Mr. Chandos stopped in his walk as he passed him, and said,—

"A fine view. Is it not?"

Upon which opening, Gideon turned round, and said,—

"Magnificent!" but being not a man to make set phrases, he added at once, "If you had a few minutes to spare, sir, I wished to say a few words, which I think ought to be said without delay."

"Could not choose a better moment, Gideon; nor, if you have a request to prefer, find me in a better humour. Whether it be the influence of this fine day or not, I find myself unusually

cheerful. So open the matter to be discussed without further preamble."

"It is about my future destination, sir."

"Well; that is all settled. I thought you understood all that perfectly. Miss Mordaunt and I agreed together long ago, that you should take orders, and I engaged to find you a living. I stupidly at the time thought of St. Bees, and a small living of my own which must some time or other be vacant; but Mr. Singletrees or Prior, I know not which, suggested, I understand, Oxford and a college-living,—a much more eligible plan in every respect, and more especially so for a man of the transcendent ability you have displayed."

As usual there was something in this speech to pain, which poisoned the pleasure its termination was calculated to give.

Gideon slightly acknowledged the compliment, and then went on,—

"I am sorry—and I fear it will seem ungrateful and presumptuous in me, circumstanced as I am, and indebted to the charity of Miss Mordaunt for bread, and to your liberality for a university education, for me to say, what I'm obliged to say, that the plan of life my friends have arranged for me is one in which I find it impossible to concur."

"How? What?" said Mr. Chandos, stepping back, and his countenance expressing displeasure and surprise. "Am I to understand, that after all that has been done to forward your education, and to put you in the way to obtain for yourself a respectable position in society, when the only road, to speak frankly, that was free from many objections, was, by the efforts of your friends, opened to you—am I to understand that, from from some unaccountable caprice, you refuse to enter upon it?"

"These are severe words, Mr. Chandos."

"Severe? Yes! It is not the first time, young man, that I have, in my treatment of you, laid myself open to that imputation, because I thought others, in their delicate sense of your situation, were too tender to you, and were in danger of spoiling you, by endeavouring to hide those stern truths which it was most of all important for you to know."

"I thank you, sir. It has been an advantage to me. It has recalled me when I was, for some moments, in danger of forgetting—brief intervals of relief—who and what I was——"

"I meant well," said Mr. Chandos, more kindly. "If I have been rough and impatient, it is because my nature is irritable, and some things have a power of annoying me more than

they ought. I cannot bear to see the best things rendered ridiculous by exaggeration, and the kindest intentions degenerating, through weakness, into evil. But, to return; the reason I advised Miss Mordaunt to select the Church for you, a little reflection on your part will point out. The Army is a poor trade for a penniless man — excuse me — Medicine and the Bar are expensive and uncertain. Who, in this uncertainty, was to be answerable for your maintenance till your profession was able to maintain you? I could not. If I die,—and I may, of course, die any day,—my whole fortune will be Celia's, and, in consequence, her husband's; we cannot burden a stranger with an obligation of this kind."

Gideon coloured high.

"Good heavens, sir! do you think I would accept such a thing?"

"Then what was to be done?" pursued Mr. Chandos, coolly. "Trade requires capital. They will not make you partner in a respectable attorney's office without capital. The Government offices, if I could get you in — which is very unlikely — why, what a life is that to a man without money or connexion? Nay, pardon me, Gideon, I must speak plain. The Church, — the Church alone afforded the certainty, if you lived, of a comfortable provision, a respectable, gentlemanlike

position, and I must add, its duties well performed of a most valuable and useful career."

"Yes, sir, I acknowledge all that; but, pardon me, I look upon this calling, I see, in a different way from what, by your last few sentences, I think you do. I do *not* think a man justified in taking orders because the Church is the only profession open to him."

"You were always too much given to your own opinions from a boy, — I called it arrogance and self-will in those days; I leave you to give it a name now. A man prepared to perform the duties of the profession conscientiously and well is always justified in taking orders."

"Perhaps — so — perhaps a question might be raised even upon *that;* — but I am not prepared to perform those duties conscientiously and well."

"How? — What can you mean?"

"That I am not capable of it."

"Truly," said Mr. Chandos, turning from him with a look of vexation, "the absurdity of the youth of these times passes my comprehension. What can you mean? Not able to perform the duties of an ordinary parish priest, — you who have done what you have at Oxford! Nonsense!"

"Perhaps *because* I have done what you are pleased to say I have at Oxford."

"Pshaw! Now you run too far the other way. I tell you, young man, there is no nobler vocation than that of the Church; and though I am sorry to say its duties are not always adequately performed, there is enough in those duties to occupy the attention and call forth the best abilities of any man—be he double-first class and prize poet, prize essayist even," with something slightly sarcastic in his tone.

Mr. Chandos did try Gideon's patience to the utmost. There was no sympathy between the two characters. The melancholy, sensitive, fastidious man of refinement,—the man, under all this, of that plain sense which is acquired by much practice of the world, and not altogether untainted by a worldly spirit—for that was his fault—could ill brook the ardour of genius, the energy and the strength which shewed itself so often in ways that offended his nice sense of justice and propriety. The opposition he had been fated to meet with from Gideon in so many unfortunate ways, had likewise, there is no doubt, added to his prejudices against him.

Gideon was silent for a moment, coloured, and bit his lips. He longed to reply to the sarcasm; stinging replies were crowding to his tongue, but he resisted the temptation. When he had a little recovered himself, he said gently,—

"Every thing is permitted from Mr. Chandos to me. I am sorry I cannot yield to his arguments; but they do not seem to meet my difficulties. After your kindness — after Miss Mordaunt's great, great, unceasing, inestimable kindness" — and his lip quivered — "I thought it right to be explicit as soon as I had made up my own mind. I will be explicit — I do *not* find in myself the qualifications essential in my opinion to a man who dedicates himself to the service of the Church. I desire,—earnestly desire to reverence my Creator as I ought, and to serve Him faithfully through the poor endeavours of my life; but I have not that deep piety — I have not that unwearying faith, which would enable me to handle holy things weekly, daily, hourly, without the dread that my hands might get seared and my heart hardened. I desire,—I earnestly desire to possess the melting soul of charity, and to live for the good of my fellow-creatures; but I have it not: my life has been too unhappy not to be absorbed by itself,—my childhood too solitary not to have been a prey to doubting and questioning thoughts; melancholy has pursued me, suffering rendered me egotistical; — by the strenuous exercise of the abilities God has pleased to give me, in the stirring business of life, can I alone hope to escape from myself. The love of my fellow-crea-

tures will arise in a heart fully occupied and so far happy; and I shall find that God in the city who hides Himself from my view in the wilderness."

"Sir," said Mr. Chandos, "your eloquence carries away yourself rather than persuades me; but I have done — I would fain know what plan you propose to pursue?"

"I wish to go to the bar."

"Do you think the tempter never enters a law-student's chambers, then?" asked Mr. Chandos, sarcastically.

"*My* evil genius will not; — every man knows best the lurking-place of his own. The solitude of Nature — the green woods — the breath of spring — the song of birds — that is what I dread: I am not afraid of the power which dwells amid rumbling carts and street-cries."

"You seem very much afraid of the companionship of your own thoughts, young man."

"I am the best judge of my own weakness," said Gideon, modestly; and then, with firmness, he added, "Hear me, Mr. Chandos; my obligations to you for the advantages of my education so far, I am fully sensible of — would to heaven it were in my power ever to repay them! — but that is the expression of an ungrateful heart ready to receive, but too proud to acknowledge, a

benefit—I have received, and I do acknowledge. Whilst I was a child, I owed unresisting obedience in return for the benefits bestowed upon me; a man, I feel it is too much to offer in return for any benefits; — I cannot sacrifice a life, and still less my conscience, to any other man's opinion, be he who he may, or my obligations to him what they may. I do not know how I shall accomplish my wishes, or where to turn or what to do; but reflection will point out my path. No man perishes utterly but by his own fault. For what you have already done, I thank you with all my heart; and am truly—truly sorry, I cannot adopt the plan you point out. I thought it right to say this at once. This conversation has been to me a very painful effort, — it is ended now. May I hope that the visit for which you have so kindly invited me may not be interrupted; or ought I, after having disappointed you in this manner, to take myself at once away? I should be sorry to seem indifferent to your kindness — more sorry to remain where I was no longer welcome."

"You have vexed me," said Mr. Chandos, softening, and beginning to feel ashamed of his ill-humour; "and I am afraid I have betrayed my spleen in a somewhat unbecoming manner. But I hope you will forgive me, Gideon; I grow splenetic, I know. Pray do not think of going away.

I will write to Miss Mordaunt, and prepare her for your change of views."

"He has given it up, dear papa,—he was surely right. There is something so pure and high in all his thoughts and feelings!"

"Ah, Kitty! Kitty!—you, too! Well, it is happy you are a woman, and not a boy. To a woman such refinements are highly becoming. But, say what you will, it will always be vexatious to me to see a man make shipwreck of his fortunes in this way."

"Better than make shipwreck of his faith," thought Celia; but what she said, was, taking her father's hand in a caressing manner,—

"It is settled, however; and now, dear papa, are you not going to be generous and kind as ever? You will do something for this young man? you will not really suffer him to be shipwrecked, will you?"

"You take great interest in him, Miss Chandos."

She looked up at him sorrowfully.

"Are you angry with me, papa?"

"Angry! No, my darling of darlings!"

"Ought I not to take interest in him? Ought not all of us?—and don't all of us? But just set

my heart at ease, pray do. Will you not be so very kind as to continue to help him? Is it not kindest and best — have I not often heard you say so, papa? — rather to forward men in the plans of life they have formed for themselves, than to dictate their course according to our own wishes and feelings, which may be so different from theirs? — and is not this a case particularly in point?"

"I don't know; this contradiction has vexed me much," was her father's reply. "And yet, though I know I am often irritable and disagreeable, I sincerely think that I am not one 'to *curb the deep desire of others*,' or to force my views down their throats.* I would not do so in this case, though I cannot help feeling persuaded the plan proposed is not the one most advisable in his case, for these professions require a man for many years to be assisted by an allowance. And consider — suppose anything were to happen to me, I am sure your mother could never go on with it out of her own jointure; and there will be time for him to be starved to death thirty times over before he makes thirty pounds a-year at the bar. I know the uncertainty of the profession."

"But if such a terrible thing should happen

* See "Life of Sir Fowell Buxton."

— which, indeed, is not likely — why could not I ——?"

"*You!* Foolish little thing!—you will have a husband long before that time, child; and husbands, let me tell you, are not always found ready to allow two or three hundred a-year to young men who have not the slightest claim upon them or theirs."

She coloured, and said,—

"I think I know some of them who would."

"Do you?" said he, looking at her with extreme pleasure; "do you, little Kitty? Well, then, here is a bargain between us: you promise to find the man who will consent in case of my death to continue the allowance, and I promise to begin it."

"Thank you — thank you! I — I — accept," and, looking a good deal hurried, she was getting up to leave the room.

"But stay — stay!" he said, "stay, my love; let me understand you. Do you know such a man, and is the man I so ardently, ardently desire to call my son ——"

"Oh, papa!" and she now coloured crimson; "how cruel you are to your poor girl!"

"I am cruel; I have been behaving like a barbarian to you all this morning, Kitty; but only tell me — only set my heart at ease; indeed,

my love — but no — no — I will not be so ungenerous. You understand me; upon this condition, dispose of me — of all I have. Make your poor father thus exquisitely happy, and do what you will with him. Yes — yes, you are right; this young man does deserve the encouragement you desire for him. I will abandon my plans, and change my views, child, at your desire. I will give him an allowance adequate to his wants at the bar. He shall have every advantage which is in my power to command for him."

Again she blushed, hesitated, turned pale, seemed to wish to speak — could not — sat down, still holding her father's hand.

"It would make me so exquisitely happy."

It would make every body so happy. She had all along made up her mind to it. She could not bear to disappoint everybody; and she was far from disliking Sir Philip, — she had known him from a boy. She was less alive to his little defects than others. She had got into the habit of supposing that she was to marry him; and now, in addition to her other reasons, Gideon would be provided with the means of following out the plan of life he desired.

It was all right and just, as it should be; and her father was so tender and kind; and they should never, never be parted. It was all right.

But why did her heart feel cold as any stone?—and why did she turn red and pale?—and why did her poor little hand tremble?—and why did the world look so dull?—and why did she feel as if she should like to die young?

"I have reflected upon what you were saying yesterday morning, Gideon, and I have talked it over with Miss Chandos. She has exhorted me to forward your wishes by every means in my power. I withdraw my objections. I will pay your fees in a special-pleader office, and allow you 250*l.* a-year besides. I do this now without scruple; for my daughter has assured me that, in case of my death before your profession could maintain you, the man she intends to marry will cheerfully continue the allowance as long as necessary. As she has known him from a boy, I believe she does not deceive herself in this respect."

A darkness passed over him. "Known from a boy!" What words!—and then what a load of painful obligation was before him! He was about to refuse at once. And yet what should he do? How was he to achieve independence unless the necessary means were accepted? Her husband! The bread thus proffered would be poison!

Mr. Chandos felt for this species of pride. He

knew how painful an obligation of this nature must be to one of Gideon's high and delicate feelings. He said, with much more kindness than usual,—

"I feel for you, Gideon; but I thought it right to state this to you. It was hardly just, and taking too much credit to myself, not to confess that it is owing to my daughter's importunity that I have yielded the point. She is about to oblige me, and bind me to her eternally by being guided in the great affair of a woman's life—her marriage—according to her poor father's judgment and wishes. I am glad to oblige her in what little lies in my power by being decided by her judgment and wishes with respect to you. She entirely approves of your resolution, and enters into your scruples; and it is at her prayer that I have determined to forward your wishes. As to its being probable that you really will ever have to accept a disagreeable obligation from a stranger—which, after all, Kitty's husband must be to you—it is of no use thinking about it. I shall, I hope, live to see you able to provide for yourself; and the evil you deprecate is too remote to be worth considering. Oblige me, for my darling Kitty's sake, by accepting my little assistance as frankly as it is offered."

He had never hoped,—he had no prospects.

He had taught himself to live under an everlasting despair. Why, then, did the darkness, as of the grave, fall over him? And yet there was one feeling of inexpressible sweetness mingled with all; she had understood him, had interested herself for him, had implored her father for him.

He looked pale—he looked black. Mr. Chandos, as usual, only half understood him. He felt for his pride, however, and pressed the allowance upon him kindly.

"It is too much—too much!" at last Gideon faltered out; "the fee to my special pleader and 100*l.* a-year for myself. I should feel degraded in my own eyes, indeed, if I accepted from your generous kindness one farthing more than absolute necessity compelled me to do."

Celia was sitting reading in a distant window; her mother was writing notes, and her father examining a portfolio of prints which Sir Philip had brought down with him from London.

Gideon came down dressed for dinner. Sir Philip, as usual, was late.

He went up to the window where she was sitting; his cheek was pale, and his voice faltered as he said,—

"You have been always kind, compassionate,

pitying, from the time when a little child you fetched me from the stairs where I was so melancholy; I think I see you now. To-day you have done me a service. I want to thank you for it as I ought; but—but my feelings are very mixed —very painful—very grateful. I hope you will understand me; I do not know what to say."

"Oh, say nothing—say nothing," in a voice so eagerly kind; "I feel all you mean,—I understand it, I think, as if it were myself. I do not like ever to allude to all you have had to suffer,—it is but to increase your pain; but, believe it, Gideon, little Kitty did not feel more anxious to make you happy than I do. Don't thank me for what I cannot help,—it has grown with me from my infancy."

She said no more, but turned to the window, and seemed looking out upon the clouds that coursed each other over a fine blue sky; and he leaned against the window-shutter behind her in silence.

CHAPTER IX.

"Nature did her so much right,
As she scorns the help of art.
In as many virtues dight,
As e'er yet embraced a heart."

W. Browne.

Thus things went on for a week.

A week!

We think it a very small portion of time. It glides past us without our taking heed of it; and, in the common course of life, is passed almost before we know it is here. But how different when crowded with events and feelings! In the history of the heart, a week!—it is a life,—an age!

Externally, however, things appeared to continue much in the same state. Sir Philip went up and down to his own house, and sometimes to town,—always returning to dinner from the one place, and never being absent more than one night at a time at the other. He had been pretty

explicit with regard to his intentions with Mr. Chandos; but, some way, he did not seem yet to have found the favourable moment for declaring his attachment to Celia. He had begged her father to make no communication to her upon the subject; he had sufficient sensibility and sufficient passion to desire to do it himself.

His attentions continued, however, unequivocal. He rather displayed than concealed his devotion to her. Whenever he was present, he engrossed her almost entirely; and she gave him her attention in return with a sort of passive gentleness, rather than with any appearance of happiness.

He did not perceive this. He seemed quite contented thus to be privileged to appropriate her; but he really, in spite of his little formality and stiffness, loved her with his whole soul. It was the genuine sincerity of this love that made him shy and timid in declaring it; for he was no woman's man, of ready speeches and easy gallantry. He and Mr. Chandos understood each other; and the declaration, which might any day be made, was in the security of the present, and in its undisturbed enjoyment, put off from day to day.

It was evident that Miss Chandos was under no delusion with respect to his intentions; it was evident she intended to accept him. She was no

coquette, to trifle with the affections of an honest heart; and enough had been manifested to make any girl of principle shew symptoms of discouragement if she intended a rejection.

But Celia, though the encouragement she gave might be called merely passive, certainly was far from offering the slightest *dis*couragement. Whenever Sir Philip addressed her, she listened; when he sat by her, she suffered him to engage her in a conversation apart; she entered into his views, seemed to share in his interests,—gave her opinion, when invited by him, upon his various plans for the future, and appeared to take particular interest in his schemes for the improvement of the condition of the poor people upon his property: in short, she might have been thought, by a mere bystander, to have been his wife, and his wife of some years. Her father was too happy to make observations; her mother far too heedless and undiscerning: no one seemed to perceive that her cheek was losing something of its roundness, her eye of its brightness; that there was now often a wandering, and as hasty a recall, of the thoughts when Sir Philip was speaking, and an acquiescence in his attentions more gently, but far more entirely, passive than before.

Once or twice a sudden flush, a sudden hectic, as of fever, would pass over her face; and then

she would rise, fetch her embroidery, change her position, and work indefatigably and silently.

When Sir Philip was away, she talked with her mother and Gideon. Lucilla, in general, absorbed Gideon very much to herself; she was evidently extremely vain of him, whom she still chose to regard as her own peculiar *protégé*. And the young man, whether from gratitude, or that he really enjoyed her sprightly conversation, gave her almost his exclusive attention.

He was upon his guard—so scrupulously upon his guard—that it must have been a discerning observer indeed who could have penetrated into what was passing within. If he felt overcome with various emotions when she addressed him in that sweet, kind way,—if his tongue faltered, and his voice hesitated and stammered, he would hide it by a sudden cough, and, disengaging himself from the company, leave the room. If, sometimes sitting in a remote corner of the apartment reading by a lamp, which fell upon his book, but threw his countenance into shade, he indulged himself with a long, earnest, melancholy gaze, yielding to all the bitterness of hopeless admiration and unmitigated despair, who saw or observed him? Who saw that the eye which was apparently fixed upon the page was riveted on her?

That she was appropriated by Sir Philip, and would, in all probability, become his wife, seemed scarcely to be felt as a matter of jealousy. It was so entirely a matter of course that she would marry,—that she would attach herself to some man in her own sphere; he had so completely settled this within himself, that it seemed to be a matter of indifference who that man was, or when the marriage was to take place. It was nothing to him whom she chose,—Sir Philip as well as any other, nay better,—for one precious balm to his feelings there was—that something in her manner to Sir Philip which he could not bring himself to envy.

Her sweet, gentle ways towards himself he could almost have liked better,—though he knew that they only proceeded from the most angelic compassion. Yet there was—though it could proceed from pure compassion alone—that in her voice when she addressed him which he would not have forfeited for all the wealth of worlds. The compassion which was irritating and offensive from others was more precious than rubies from her.

If the slight shade of indisposition which was creeping over her escaped everybody's notice, it was very natural that they should still less concern themselves about him. The burning spot upon his cheek with which he would come down

to breakfast—the sinking cheek—the hollow eye —these inroads upon health were gradual, and who loved him well enough to care about them? Provided he rattled and talked away, what cared Lucilla that his voice was so often hoarse and his laugh hollow? As for Mr. Chandos, all his jealous susceptibility was at an end. Satisfied with regard to his daughter, his temper seemed to have softened into the most delightful amenity: nothing could be more agreeable than his society at this time, and he seemed to enjoy Gideon's conversation particularly,—an implied compliment which the young man appreciated fully. And, in fact, it was no small enjoyment even now to exchange ideas with a mind like his—and he, too, the father of Celia.

They discussed subjects of classical lore—such as are interesting only to the initiated few. Every day Gideon rose in Mr. Chandos's esteem, and he rejoiced that he had been persuaded by his daughter to the friendly part he had adopted—openly rejoiced—he gave Gideon the satisfaction of knowing this, and how highly he appreciated him at last.

Sir Philip, as I said, went and came—went and came—but the decisive words had not yet passed his lips. Though she could not misunderstand his meaning, she had yet not heard that

declaration of passion, often in itself sufficient to call into life those tenderer feelings which, till that moment, have lain dormant in the woman's heart.

A week—ten days—and then came a little event to interrupt the monotony of a country life thus occupied.

Lucilla received a letter at the breakfast-table directed in an unknown hand. She tossed it about a little time, wondering whose or what it might be. One always hopes for some little mystery when a letter in quite an unknown hand arrives—and a mystery is a delightful thing at a country breakfast-table; and poor Lucilla was just at that time horribly in want of an adventure. Her active spirit had literally been craving for occupation and sinking from want of stimulus, since she had found it impossible to raise a fight about Gideon. Every body treated him so pleasantly. Even Sir Philip himself, whether to please Miss Chandos or that he really liked him, treated him almost with distinction.

"Well, I do wonder whom it can be from?—What can it be about?—I certainly never did see this hand before—and I am so atrociously

ennuyée just now, I would give the world for something new."

"Your dress-maker's bill probably," said Mr. Chandos, looking up from his newspaper. "What a to-do about a letter that—you may depend upon it, Lucilla, I am sorry for you — has nothing like an event in it!"

"I am certain it's not from Mrs. Longstitch, however," said Lucilla, "but here goes!"

And out of the envelope tumbled a play-bill.

"Delightful!" cried she, eagerly seizing it. "I've not been at a play this fifty years."

She read the bill.

"Oh, charming!—I expected a repetition of the old everlasting things, 'Rivals'—or 'School for Scandal'—or 'Clandestine Marriage'—Lord Ogleby by Mr. Figg, or Lady Teazle by Mrs. Potter—the old set—but go I would—I am so sick of doing nothing—when, lo! and behold, what do you think that jewel of a manager has done?—He's got Frederick Lemaistre and Mademoiselle Fierville down for one single night—and they're going to play Ruy Blas. Keep moving—how one gets on in the world!—Frederick Lemaistre down at the little theatre at Lavington! Isn't it rich?"

So she ran on—and threw the play-bill to her husband.

"Won't you go?"

"No, most assuredly; but I dare say you will?"

"Yes, most assuredly; and all the rest of you,—Kitty, Sir Philip, Gideon—I must take a box. Poor man! here's his note,—the poor manager. He says it's a hazardous experiment to attempt to give a French play at a country theatre, and that he relies upon the support of the *neighbourhood*, with a dash under the word;—better not shew that to the townspeople, or they will not one of them come, though they will be dying to shew they understand French."

"Which they probably all do perfectly well," said Mr. Chandos; "but who is this Frederick Lemaistre? Have any of you ever heard of him?"

No one had but Gideon. He had once seen his "Four Scenes of a Gambler's Life," and mentioned it as the very triumph of acting.

"Really! well, ring the bell, will you, dear? I must send forthwith and take a box: but this is not your 'Four Scenes of a Gambler's Life!' 'Ruy Blas!' Who knows anything about Ruy Blas?"

Not one of them. They were none of them much acquainted with recent French dramatic literature. Mr. Chandos resumed his newspaper,

and Sir Philip the perusal of his numerous letters, whilst the three others talked on together.

"Do *you* know nothing of Ruy Blas, Gideon? Victor Hugo's? What a shame to be all of us so ignorant! I wonder what it is all about?"

"I have not the slightest idea; but I will venture to promise you that a play of Victor Hugo's, and the acting of Lemaistre, will be well worth your seeing."

"Well, you will like to go, of course?"

"Most exceedingly."

"And you, Kitty?"

"Very much, indeed, dear mamma."

"And you, Sir Philip?"

"Very sorry, indeed," said Sir Philip, who had no great relish for a country theatre — not much taste for æsthetics in any shape; "but, by this letter, I am bespoken to a dinner with my honourable constituents, whose humble slave I am; and I am afraid I shall not get away till midnight."

"My poor box! I shall have it half filled. Oh, Jackson!" as the servant entered, "send William to Lavington, and bid him take me the centre box for to-night. Stay; I'll write Mr. Manager a line."

"Now, Kitty," coming back to her place. "You're quite sure you won't go, Sir Philip.

Well, the box just contains six places. Quite sure you won't go, Mr. Chandos?"

"You must excuse me."

"Well then, Kittisa, we'll do the good-natured for once; let us take Mr. and Mrs. Frankland and their daughter—they never get a lark—that will make six, and will just fill the box and the carriage, if you and I and Lettice squeeze upon the back seat together, and Gideon will go on the box. We can do without a servant for once in a way. Those Franklands never get to see anything. Do you hear, child?"

"Oh, yes!" she was folding and unfolding her napkin.

"Oh, yes!" starting up from her chair, and then colouring and sitting down again. "It will be so nice. It is so good-natured of you, dear mamma, to think of them."

"We can squeeze, I say, all into the carriage if Gideon will go upon the box. Eh?"

"Oh! perfectly well."

"I think," said Mr. Chandos, "you had better take a footman, for your new horses are not the steadiest in the world, and John ought not to leave his box. I very much approve of the motion, my dear Lucilla, and only beg to add, as an amendment, that you take your own brougham to convey Mr. and Mrs. Frankland,

who will be much better in that than in that half-open, half-shut, fantastical carriage."

"True, quite true; poor dear old turtles! Mrs. Frankland's evening would be quite spoiled for fear the good old soul should catch cold. Really, Mr. Chandos, I don't know what's going to happen to us — some great event I am sure; we quite agree together this morning. There, Kitty of my heart, go and write a note to Mrs. Frankland; and — stay — ask them to dinner, child, at half-past four, for we must be off at half-past five."

She rose up to obey. As she passed her father, he caught hold of her by the arm, and pointed to what he was reading in the newspaper.

She stooped down to look at the passage, and coloured at seeing Sir Philip's name.

It was *apropos* of some subject or other, and there was an extract of considerable length from some speech of his uttered upon a former occasion; it was quoted with expressions of strong and just praise.

"I will come again," whispered she, colouring; "mamma wants me to write for her now."

"I will leave the paper in your dressing-room."

He released her arm and went away.

Gideon went away, too.

His soul was thrilling with pleasure, wild as it was unreasonable, at the idea of spending this evening with her and her mother, and that good Mr. and Mrs. Frankland, who were but as mere cyphers in his estimation. He wanted to be alone—his nerves were at that moment in such a state of tension, that the sound even of the voices around him was intolerable. He abruptly left the room by another door, and wandered into the garden.

But the light of the sun, as it glanced upon the rich and beautiful assemblage of colours—flowers of every hue—the light dazzled his eyes—the rays seemed bent with a force scarcely endurable upon his brow; he turned into an arched berceau path which led into the woods, and sought to hide himself in the shade of the thickets.

It was beginning to be more than he could stand. This state of agitation—these intense and hopeless longings after a for ever unattainable good—these conflicts with self—this aching of the heart, and this desperate struggle against inclination steadily to keep the cruel truth of his situation before his mind, in spite of those delusive, flattering voices, that would whisper their entrancing fables in his ear,—to keep steadily in

view the remembrance of what he was, and what she was—that she was as far out of his sphere as the inhabitant of another planet, and that, were she once to divine his passion, it would be but to draw down upon himself only disgust and contempt. Bitter truths on which he forced himself to dwell, whilst his heart and fancy were straining to be free,—all this was becoming too much. The almost supernatural exertions he had been making at the university had for the time considerably weakened his nerves, and his frame seemed yielding fast to the continued fever upon his spirit.

He had so yearned after happiness; but the world contained no happiness for him. Existence was become a blank—the life before him a dreary waste; and as he roamed through those dark woods that day, and saw the silent pools, gleaming from time to time between the trees, he thought of that dark, still water at Mordaunt Hall, and upon the hapless mother who there had sought for rest.

"I come, mother,—yes, I come!" was then the cry of his heart, as he thought that the day must soon arrive—it could not be long delayed—when she would be married to Sir Philip. Then he longed to lay his head upon his mother's bosom—then he would seek where to weep. His mother!

—yes, he could have told his mother; the dream so audacious and preposterous in the eyes of every one else would not have been so in hers,—he could have told her all, and she would have comforted him.

How utterly—utterly alone in the world did he at that moment feel!

He heard the stable-clock sound the half after three, and hurried back to the house.

When he got into his room and looked into his glass, he was shocked at his own haggard appearance, his eye looked so sunken, his cheek so hollow and so pale.

He endeavoured vainly to restore his natural complexion by bathing his face repeatedly in cold water,—it would not do. There was a dull pain at his chest, his breathing came with an unusual sense of difficulty, and his languid eyes gave but too plain indication of the oppression within.

However he dressed himself carefully, arranged his hair, and came down.

Celia was sitting in the drawing-room with the rest when he entered, but the Franklands had not yet arrived. She was dressed a little more than for the mere home dinner. Her dress was a white silk with a fall of fine lace, her hair simply drawn round her face, and a bunch of blush rosebuds upon one side. A gold chain

was round her throat, a hair bracelet or two set off those lovely little arms. She looked, as he thought, paler and more thoughtful than usual, and sat silent whilst the rest talked.

More interestingly beautiful she seemed than ever to his despairing eyes. Oh, why must she be so interesting and so beautiful that evening? He did not sit down, but went and stood behind Lucilla's chair, from thence he might gaze upon her as much as he liked unreproved—for where he stood no one could observe him. Mr. and Mrs. Frankland and their daughter now arrived. They were good-natured, simple people, such as live in neat houses in country villages, are the great folks of their own little circle, but always well pleased to be little folks admitted to the circle above them. They both had much to say upon Mrs. Chandos's kindness, and what a treat it was to them who had no carriage to go to the play; and they wondered whether they should be able to make out M. Lemaistre's French, and hoped he spoke plain; "For," said good Mr. Frankland, "having never been abroad, but one week at Bou*lonne*, we are not so well acquainted with the language as you are, no doubt, Mrs. Chandos, who have spent so much of your time in the elegant dissipations of Paris."

Miss Frankland blushed and laughed, and talked and laughed again. Every sentence was ushered in or followed by a laugh, and she, too, talked of herself.

'Oh, how she liked a play! and how seldom she went to one; and how she hoped she should make it out; and wondered what Ruy Blas meant, whether it was a man's name—she had never heard it before, and wondered whether Miss Chandos knew.'

Who answered,—

"That she knew nothing of the play, but believed Ruy Blas was a man's name."

And then they went to dinner. Mr. Chandos and Sir Philip excusing themselves, so Gideon took Mrs. Frankland, and Mr. Frankland took Mrs. Chandos, and the two girls followed by themselves.

It was a very chatty dinner, as far as the Franklands were concerned, who seemed to enjoy themselves and do their very best to make themselves agreeable. Lucilla repaid their endeavours by one or two terrific yawns, which she took little pains to repress. Gideon was serious and silent. It seemed, as if he could not, or would not, make his usual exertions; there was no one to observe him, he indulged his melancholy without restraint. Celia, alone, tried with

her usual good-nature, to talk, but the tone of her voice was spiritless and languid; and she cast now and then an anxious look at Gideon as if to ask what was amiss with him.

A dinner a couple of hours earlier than usual, and by broad daylight, is always a tiresome thing. All three seemed glad when it was over; and at the sound of the carriage-wheels, Lucilla, recovering her spirits, jumped up and called for shawls and wraps.

CHAPTER X.

"Shade by shade have glooms decreast,
Westward stars and night have gone—
Up and up the crimsoning east
Slowly mounts the golden dawn . . . .
Tranced lies its golden prime
Dumb with utter joy."—W. C. Bennett.

Miss Frankland proved to be one of those inconvenient young ladies who cannot sit backwards in a carriage. Gideon and Celia were placed side by side.

It was the first time in his life that he had been in the same carriage with Miss Chandos. This sort of approach to equality was sweet as it was dangerous. He had not, however, the felicity of being the one to hand her in, her father took that care upon himself. Mr. Chandos placed her inside with the tenderness of a lover, wrapped her shawl round her, bade her be sure not to take cold, &c. The old jealousy upon the subject of Gideon had, however, as I have told you, entirely ceased; he looked upon Celia as en-

gaged to Sir Philip, who had confided to him his determination to make his declaration the very next day, and it was with perfect indifference that the once anxious father saw the young man enter the carriage, and place himself by his daughter's side.

His heart was more agitated. It was with the utmost difficulty he could conceal his emotion. She was pensive and said little. Miss Frankland again made the agreeable, and talked to Lucilla, who leaned back in the carriage and yawned.

It was an hour's drive to Lavington.

Lucilla, who hated the exertion of talking in a carriage, did not, as Gideon dreaded, call upon him to exert himself, or abuse him for his dullness and preoccupation. She was listless and half asleep, and he might, at least, enjoy the luxury of silence. Now and then, as the carriage advanced rapidly, and the wind discomposed the large Indian shawl which Mr. Chandos had so carefully wrapped round his daughter, Gideon had to turn and readjust it. He was hurried and nervous—his hands trembled, but no one perceived it. She would thank him, gently turning up her eyes to his face, and letting them fall again. She kept looking down—she was very thoughtful and grave.

At last the carriage stopped—they had arrived.

He sprang out, and had first to hand out Lucilla, she at once took his arm, and the two young ladies were assisted out by the footman, then they joined Mr. and Mrs. Frankland, and entered the theatre.

It was a poor, little, dark place; and M. Frederick Lemaistre and Mademoiselle Fierville condescended greatly when they suffered themselves to be persuaded to act there; but, perhaps, that master of his art might be aware how favourable a very small theatre is to the just appreciation of so unrivalled a performance.

Lucilla was disappointed, and inclined to be offended, when she found that the centre and two adjacent boxes had been engaged before her servant had arrived, the obscure side box was what remained for her and her party. There were four places in front, and two behind, from which the stage could be seen pretty well; but the box was ill-lighted, as indeed was all the spectators' portion of the theatre. That might be a measure either of good taste or of economy upon the part of the manager, it is certain that it added very much to the effect of a somewhat indifferently lighted stage.

"Ruy Blas" is a strange, passionate French drama, upon a thoroughly French subject. I

never read it, but retain a lively recollection of the piece, as I saw it acted by this identical Frederick Lemaistre and Mademoiselle Fierville, —the first of whom is known by reputation to every body—the second, as it appeared to me quite his equal in the perfection of her acting, I have never chanced to see or hear of again.

I was as ignorant of the subject-matter of the piece of "Ruy Blas" when I went to see it, as any of our present party could be. The piece is open, no doubt, to all sort of objections, but the effect produced, when thus acted, is great indeed.

The story is of some dependant upon the court of Spain, of quite inferior degree, who has fallen desperately, hopelessly in love with its queen.

The wild passion of the character of the man, as fearfully displayed by M. Lemaistre, was rivalled by the exquisite delicacy, beauty, and softness of Mademoiselle Fierville's representation of the lovely object of his adoration,—hapless and too feeling being, withering under the miserable influences of a life of cold, dreary etiquette!

The Franklands, with some awkwardness, had managed, in the little hurry of entering the box, to get into the three other front places, after Lucilla had seated herself in one. Much was Mr. Frankland's fuss and confusion in discovering that there was only a place behind left for

Miss Chandos; but the piece had already begun when they entered the theatre, and she would not suffer the audience to be disturbed by changes and alterations. She sat down upon the upper seat, next the partition of the box, Mr. and Mrs. Frankland before her, and Gideon at her side, and was soon absorbed, like all the rest, by what was going on.

The thrilling interest of the piece entirely occupied Lucilla's attention, who was just one to be fascinated by this wild tale of passion. Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Frankland were entirely taken up with their endeavours to understand the story, and their whispering explanations to each other as they made it out by degrees.

Celia and Gideon sat down, and both immediately fixed their eyes upon the stage, little imagining the scenes about to be displayed before them; but both, irresistibly attracted by this unequalled acting, sat there watching the progress of the piece with deep attention.

At first they did not either of them seem to clearly understand the story, — but soon their attention was riveted by what was going on, and the colour on their cheeks began to change.

As Ruy Blas describes, with the wildest violence of passion to his friend, all the agonies of his mind, the heart of Gideon began to beat

thick and fast; but at the exclamation, made with mingled horror and exultation, "*Je suis jaloux du Roi d'Espagne!*" he started and looked wildly round.

She sat there, her eyes fixed upon the scene, trembling in every limb.

The lovely, lovely queen appeared—the very picture, in her gentle grace, her unparalleled delicacy and softness, of the creature by his side—and the piece proceeds.

And feeling answered to feeling as there they sat together,—he shuddering, she trembling, with emotion.

One wild, terrified, hurried, distracted glance!

Their eyes meet—and the tale is told!

Neither then, nor afterwards, nor ever, did this passion find a voice.

Words would have been useless, vain, powerless.

He sat there, perfectly bewildered with his emotions.

She never lifted her eyes from the stage again.

She was deadly pale, and kept trembling excessively.

As for him, it is vain to attempt to paint his

sensations, or the wild rush of exultation and joy which succeeded to his long-endured misery. His chest is heaving stormily — he can scarcely breathe!

To master these emotions, to preserve the appearance of calmness, required so violent a struggle with himself, that he felt as if it were killing him.

The rest is all confusion.

Of the remainder of that evening they neither of them seemed afterwards to retain any distinct recollection.

They found themselves in the carriage — they hardly knew how. The night was very dark, the carriage shut up, and it was nearly dark within.

They sat perfectly silent by each other,—the only words that passed during that carriage-drive of an hour were,—

"You tremble so,—let me lay this shawl over you."

"No. I am not cold."

Such was Gideon's habitual mastery over himself, as far as external deportment went, that, strange as it may appear, he had gone through all the little bustle necessary upon leaving the theatre, sending for the carriages, and attending to Mrs. Chandos, with the precision of an auto-

maton; while Celia, silent and pale, held fast by good old Mr. Frankland's arm.

Nobody's attention seemed attracted to either of them. It was very late when they got home. They deposited Miss Frankland at her own house, and found, when they arrived at Elmwood, that Mr. Chandos was gone to bed, and Sir Philip not returned from his dinner; so they all took their candles in the hall, without going into the drawing-room.

"Law! I am so horridly tired," yawned Lucilla. "Those odious, narrow benches, and the stifling heat of the little dog-hole of a theatre! Next time Mr. Manager applies to me for my countenance I would advise him to reserve me a better box. Aw—a—a—how sleepy I am! .... Here, Gideon, give the poor child her candle. What do you stand holding both in your hands for with all the grace of a dancing bear? My dear Celia, you have not the stamina of a butterfly—why you actually look quite faint. Won't you have some supper,—or will you have it in your room? I am too tired to wait for mine."

"I thank you, mamma,—in my room, if you please."

She took her candle in silence, and turned away.

"Good night, Gideon," cried Lucilla. "Good night for both. The poor child seems really too tired to speak. Good night! You were quite right—it was the finest piece of acting I think I ever saw, and in spite of Mr. Manager's box I am very glad we went."

And she followed her daughter up-stairs.

"Good night, Kitty," as they reached the landing-place together. "Good night, child. What did you think of it? But you really look too much jaded just now to enter into an analysis of M. Lemaistre's incomparable acting. I wish you could be like me — tired to death without being so horribly exhausted. But you are but a delicate, wee bit of a thing, my sweet little Kitty."

"What a pretty, pretty creature it is!" said the mother to herself, as she went down the gallery to her own room. "What a pity Mr. Chandos gave her such a sad, sentimental education! She is as sensitive as the mimosa plant, and fades and droops at the least touch. Now, what's Hecuba to her, or she to Hecuba?—'Tears in her eyes, distraction in her aspect,' quite overcome evidently by the mere effect of this simulated passion. But it is a wild, desperate love-tale, to be sure. Just such as calls up every feeling one has, or ever thought one had—just such as one should

find irresistible. I wonder if I had loved a Ruy Blas, instead of being married to Mr. Chandos, what it would have made of me—something a good deal different from what I am now, I fancy. Well, poor Kitty won't find much more excitement in the company of Sir Philip; but *she* won't mind it, pretty, gentle creature! She's so different from me."

Such were the thoughts that passed through her mind as her maid unbound the tresses of her magnificent hair, and after the usual ceremonies consigned her to repose.

CHAPTER XI.

"Oh, Nightingale! thou wert for golden Junes,
Not for the gusts of March."—W. C. Bennett.

It was impossible to close his eyes. He did not even attempt it. Instead of going to his room he passed out through a side door into the garden. Her windows looked upon the garden.

He watched the light as it moved slowly from one side of the room to the other, and pictured her languid, trembling step. But the curtains were thick; not even her shadow could be seen. Yet he kept standing there, leaning against a tree and looking up, long after the light was extinguished. The night was cold for that season of the year, almost frosty; but the sharp wind was refreshing to his fevered senses; he bared his forehead and his bosom to its influence.

The dull pain at his chest was fixed there: but he did not, in the hurry and confusion of his pulses, and the panting, choking sensations about his chest, advert to it. Neither did he reflect much, if at all, upon the consequences which were to follow from the events of that evening. His thoughts seemed at a pause,—the present was too overwhelming, too mighty,—it occupied the whole of thought and feeling.

When the day began to dawn he went up to his room, and threw himself upon his bed; he was quite exhausted.

Observe, that there was rapture, but there was no joy; bliss beyond hope, but not hope; a present of ecstasy almost beyond his power to support, but the future a blank—not a dreary desert, but a positive, absolute blank—he expected nothing.

Her love had elevated him in his own opinion to a place higher than that of princes; but he knew still he was but Ruy Blas and she the Queen of Spain.

Celia sent down word that she was too much tired to come down at breakfast. Mr. Chandos looked very much disappointed, and Sir Philip was moody.

When Lucilla appeared, however, there was no want of conversation. She was loud in her praises of the piece, entered into the particulars of the plot, described the characters, and enlarged upon the wonderful powers of the two principal actors.

"Such a situation," cried she, "no one but Victor Hugo could have pictured it as he has. Such a position! I love such inconceivable situations! An inferior dependant—a man that ought not to have ventured even to look at her—to have the daring audacity to fix his passionate love upon the Queen of Spain! Oh, it *was* fine!"

"What do you mean by *fine?*" said Mr. Chandos, peevishly. "It seems to me, by your account, to be a piece of regular French sentimental nonsense, to say nothing of its offence against all morality. But that last consideration is a mere trifle of course in judging of such things. I hate these pictures of unnatural passion — for unnatural I do call it. Happily in human life man does not thus overstep the limits of possibility and propriety in his attachments. Kind meets kind — people in such cases almost instinctively do as they ought, and almost invariably fix their affections upon those in their own sphere."

"Do they? Yes, I believe they do in general. Man is a poor, humdrum, grovelling creature for the most part,—but there *are* spirits. The dull, mill-horse round of prosperity will not restrain some spirits — mounting spirits! Oh! here you come, Master Gideon, at last. This is liberty hall, but the tea is quite cold. Why, I protest you look as if Ruy Blas had half killed you as well as Celia: but it *was* an exciting affair, it must be confessed."

Mr. Chandos looked up sharply at Gideon, who coloured and sat down, muttering something that was meant for an apology.

"You seem to have had a strange, wild sort of play last night," said Mr. Chandos, eyeing him with a scrutinising look. "Did Lemaistre equal your expectations?"

"I beg your pardon!" starting. "Yes—very ——"

"Did you know the story of the piece before you went?—but I should think not. And, now I recollect, you said you did not. You would have hardly else, I conceive, have recommended Miss Chandos to go and see it."

"I beg your pardon!—I have got a terrific headache—I really did not hear what it was you said—I beg your pardon a thousand times!"

"It is no matter. I was speaking of what

appears to me, by the account Mrs. Chandos gives of it, to have been a very stupid and vicious play."

"Vicious! — stupid! Yes — oh, yes! very indeed!"

"I wonder, then, that *you* would suffer Miss Chandos to sit it out."

"I — I —— I did not — how could ——"

"True; and yet I should have thought it might have suggested itself to you — I mean that you might have suggested to Mrs. Chandos," still eyeing him steadily, "as soon as you understood the scope of the piece ——"

"My dear Mr. Chandos, how prodigiously absurd you are!" interrupted Lucilla. "You *must* be thinking of something else" — and true enough he was — "and not know what you are talking of! *He* suggest to *me* the inconceivable prudery — the ridicule of going away. He might have suggested away as long as he pleased, but he knew full well that I was not so utterly devoid of all common sense as to have heeded him. My dear Mr. Chandos, you really are propriety mad — it is your fixed idea. We shall have you committing all sorts of absurdities in the name of propriety!"

For all answer Mr. Chandos rose and rang the bell.

"Tell Miss Chandos's maid to let me know as soon as she is in her sitting-room."

Mr. Chandos and Sir Philip were soon walking up and down the terrace together, and Sir Philip was saying that it was absolutely necessary that he should leave Elmwood Park that evening, "upon business connected with his parliamentary interest," and, therefore, that he did hope to be admitted to see Miss Chandos before he went. He wished to declare his passion and press his suit in person; he had hesitated and procrastinated, but he could not go away unsatisfied.

He did not seem, nor did Mr. Chandos, to have the slightest apprehension as to the result of his personal application for her favour; indeed, she had given as much encouragement to his attentions as could be expected from one of so much delicacy; but it was natural that the young man should feel anxious to have every thing settled and concluded before he left her father's house, upon an absence that might be extended to some weeks.

"She will probably come down, for she knows how glad I am to see her in a morning; if not, I will make an inroad into her dressing-

room with you. It is provoking that she is so much tired this morning; but Mrs. Chandos tells me that the little theatre was most oppressively hot and the benches wretched."

Celia's maid was now seen jauntily approaching down the garden. She came to tell Mr. Chandos that his daughter was dressed, but did not feel well enough to come down just yet—she was still in her dressing-room.

"I am coming to her immediately. Did she ask for me?"

"No, sir."

"Not ask for me! Then she is coming down."

"No, sir, I believe not."

"Tell her I am coming to see her immediately. I am afraid she is ill."

"I think Miss Chandos has rather a headache, sir."

"Come along, my dear friend; it's always a nervous sort of a business, unless one blunders upon it unprepared at some odd moment or another: but, at least, you will not be disturbed, and you will understand each other in a moment."

So saying, the happy father took his intended son-in-law's arm, and the two gentlemen proceeded together towards the house.

They went straight up-stairs, passed through the gallery, and Mr. Chandos knocked at Celia's dressing-room door. It was the room at the very end of it,—

"Come in," said a faint voice.

He opened the door—she was alone!

She was dressed in a sort of elegant wrapping-gown, a kind of slight invalid dress; her hair braided round her head quite plainly; her face looked very pale, and, by the redness of her eyes, it was evident she had been crying.

"My love," said Mr. Chandos, as he entered, "here is a visitor come with me who is obliged to leave us this evening; he petitions, before he sets out, for leave to come and bid you farewell. I have made bold to grant it, for I believe he is never altogether an unwelcome guest."

She started, coloured violently, and said,—"Oh, no!" looking earnestly at the door.

It was what she expected, that he would go away. She hardly hoped to be permitted ever to see him again. Strange that he should venture to ask it; and yet to see him once more —— Oh, he was right, they could not part for ever without meeting once more!

Quick as lightning thoughts absurd as these had passed through her brain.

With cheek like crimson, and eyes of eager expectation, she turned to the door.

Sir Philip entered, and her father instantly left the room, shutting the door after him.

She gave a faint shriek, sank upon the sofa, and covered her face with her hands.

"Celia! Miss Chandos! dear, dear Celia! I am not a man of fine words! My love—my adored, I am not master of the art of expressing passion—I have never practised such! I have never loved but you—you only, you dearly, since I was a boy—a child—so dearly—so dearly! I have dreaded this declaration—felt shy—afraid—so sensible of my own unworthiness—so deeply, deeply devoted to you—your father—my father—my own, own Celia! ——"

She let her hands fall from her face, and looked at him with a sort of horrid dismay.

"My sweetest love!" said he, in a most tender and feeling voice, endeavouring to throw his arm round her, but she drew back. "What is the matter? Surely, best beloved of my heart, surely—surely this cannot take you by surprise! Surely you must have seen—must have well, well known, that this heart was only, only yours!—that all the joy of my life was centred in you—that I loved you dearly, truly, fervently!—that I loved nothing else on earth—that to do my duty

to my fellow-men and make you happy were the only objects of my life! Your father, my sweetest!—your father ——"

"Oh, don't! don't!" shaking her head with a strange sort of fearful wildness, and drawing still farther back from him, as he knelt on one knee by her sofa.

"My darling! my Celia!" with the greatest tenderness of tone and manner, laying his hand upon both hers. But she shook it off impatiently, and, starting up from her seat as she did so, uttered a wail mournful beyond expression and sank back again.

He had started up at this from his knee, and stretched out his arms to catch her as she fell down again upon the sofa, like one from whom all strength and elasticity of limb were departed —like one but half alive, in short.

But again she shook him off, shuddering and trembling violently, and saying,—

"Don't—don't—don't!"

He now sat down by her upon the sofa, and, looking very grave and very much concerned, he said,—

"Celia, you are either very far from well—very nervous, and quite over done with last night's ——"

"Oh! oh!" she cried quite wildly.

"What is it, my darling?" starting up quite terrified, and then again sitting down by her and vainly endeavouring to soothe her—"what is it, my darling, darling love? Nay, let me, Celia," he said with tears—"don't be offended—don't be angry! You are—you are my darling! and Heaven only knows how dear ——"

"My God! my God! have pity upon us all!" she said, and burst out into tears.

She covered her face with her hands, and the tears streamed through her fingers, while he sat by watching her, and every now and then catching the drops as they fell with his handkerchief. By and by he tried gently to draw her hands from her face, but she said,—

"No, no, let me cry—pray do—it does me good!"

"Weep, then, my sweetest, if it does you good. Have I surprised and hurried you, then, so much? How can I have done so? You must have seen that my heart has been panting to make this declaration ever since I have been here, and yet I have dreaded it. I don't know why, for had I not—and did you not know I had—Celia, your father's sanction; and have you ever given me reason to fear that I might not hope for your regard? I am not, my dear,—I know I am not, made to excite, or perhaps

to feel, those stormy gusts of passion which we have all read the representation of in our youth, but of which I doubt the existence in real human life. I never thought or wished to excite such feelings in you—I never felt, nor wished to feel, such a surrender of the whole being to one overpowering sentiment myself. I have loved you sincerely, truly, deeply, honourably, with my whole heart; I wish to make you my wife, Celia,—my loved, cherished, honoured wife, and to pass life with you, as in my opinion an English gentleman and a Christian man ought to wish to pass it, rationally and usefully."

As he spoke thus more calmly and quietly, her tears began to abate. She let her hands fall from her face, and listened to him with her eyes fixed upon the ground, and a deep gravity settling itself gradually upon her features.

"You know well, my love, that my dear father and your most deeply honoured father were the closest of friends, and we have been brought up, as it were, to belong to each other. I have found my heart irrevocably bound to you ever since I knew what my own affections were, and you have never, never given me reason to fear that my devotion was unacceptable to you."

"True, true, I own it. My father ——"

"Did you not?—You must have understood me all along."

"Oh, yes! I don't pretend to say —— I did! —I did!"

"Then why," again endeavouring to take her hand, but she would withdraw it—"why, why, Celia, this strange, strange sadness now? Why will you who are so gentle that you would not knowingly hurt the very worm beneath your feet—why will you be so cruelly unfeeling to me alone? Why will you wound a heart that is only, only yours, and that would not willingly give you pain to save his life, Kitty?"

She turned her eyes so mournfully upon him, with a look so bewildered and so sad, yet any thing but unkind,—

"Oh, that is like yourself—you cannot be harsh or unjust! but why, why, my darling, darling love, do you look so unhappy?"

"Oh, Philip!"

He seized her hand and kissed it with rapture.

"Don't! don't!" said she again, with much agitation, "you're breaking my heart!"

"I—good heavens!—I!"

"You are so good and so generous; and I have been—I am—so dreadfully wicked."

"Celia!" he cried, with alarm. "Good God! she's raving!"

"No, no; I am not. No, no; let me speak! Philip, listen! I can't help it; I am *so* sorry; but I have been deceiving you, myself, my father, —every body—all this time."

He made no answer; he kept waiting, with his eyes fixed upon her, for what would come next.

It came in hurried, broken sentences.

"I thought my heart was my own—indeed I did;—because, though there was one .... I thought—I thought—oh! I mean I thought .... I *did* think—but I never thought he cared the least for me;—and you loved me—and my father loved me—and I loved my father *so*—and I wanted so to make him and every body happy—and you especially, Philip, because you were so good, and so busy for others;—and I never thought but I could make you quite happy—and I would, indeed;—but last night—oh, last night!—that play! that play!—why did they let me see that play?—and oh! good Heavens above my head!—why—why with him?—with —with—with Gideon?"

The last word was uttered in so low a voice that none but the anxious and excited ear of her lover could have caught the sound.

He started at the fatal name; and muttering between his teeth, "The d—— insidious scoun-

drel!" rose and paced the room some time with hurried, irregular steps. He was striving to master the passion of rage and disappointment into which this most unexpected confession had thrown him. She watched him with eyes full of remorse and pity; till at length, after a desperate struggle with himself, he came and sat down again by her, and said, with an almost unnatural calmness,—

"Then I am to understand that last night, at the theatre, this young man—this Gideon—this foundling—found an opportunity of declaring his passion for the daughter of Mr. Chandos, of Elmwood Park?"

"Declaring! What do you mean?"

"I am to understand by what you say, I think, that you had received no open declaration—that he had not had the audacity to prefer his suit before—*his* suit!"

It is impossible by words to express the bitter contempt,—the utter disdain, with which the last words were uttered.

"Declaration!—words!" said she, mechanically, and looking quite bewildered. "Suit!—words! He never spoke a word to me in his life that ——"

"Indeed, Miss Chandos, you take a very unkind pleasure in tormenting me—provoking me,

I might say—only you never, do what you will, *shall* provoke me. I thought you said, that at this abominable play he presumed to make an avowal of a passion which he ought to have died," lowering his voice, "knowing what you are and what he is, rather than have insulted your ears with."

She looked gravely displeased, and said, —

"What insult any woman can receive from the offer of such a heart, and from such a man as Gideon, I do not know; I, at least, should not feel insulted by it. But that avowal he never did make—he never would. I understand him well, though no one else does. Not a syllable has been exchanged between us,—never has—never will. I know my duty to my father, and Gideon knows his to me—to himself. We shall, probably, never, never meet again upon this side the grave. I thank you, Philip; your unjust contempt for him has been of service to me. I was so wretched, so hurried; but now I have courage to tell you how it is:—I am no longer my own, and never will I marry any man."

He could have trampled Gideon under his feet at that moment. His pride was aroused; he felt insulted in his tenderness, wounded in his most sacred feelings, by such a rival.

He did not attempt to remonstrate farther;

but rising from the sofa, where he sat by her side, walked quietly out of the room.

The anguish of her father may be imagined by those who have loved a child as he had done. In her he had garnered up his soul—had seen, as he thought, the most anxious prayer of a good father's heart for a loved daughter satisfied,—she so well, so honourably, so safely bestowed, and every anxiety of his too anxious affection set at rest.

And to have the whole edifice of domestic pride—the best hope and dearest plan of his life so unexpectedly overthrown ;—and by what and by whom?

The proud contempt he had nourished which, in the haughty fastidiousness of his heart—a heart of which it may justly be said, such haughty exclusiveness was the great, the only fault—driving him almost to madness when he thought that the poor, disowned foundling—the object of his charity—was the cause of this soul-rending catastrophe—this cruel, cruel disappointment.

He was almost beside himself.

I think I have elsewhere observed upon the terrible force of passion when these gentle characters—who, under their gentleness, often con-

ceal most acute feelings—are driven beyond themselves by some overpowering emotion.

He left Sir Philip, and quite terrific in his grief and his rage, hurried to his daughter's room.

He entered,—turned round before he looked at her,—shut, locked, double-locked, the door; and then, going up to her sofa, stood before her for some minutes, gazing upon her, speechless with rage and sorrow.

She was still sitting where Sir Philip left her, and had remained there motionless, her face buried in the pillow of the sofa, almost stupid with exhausted feeling. She had made no resolutions, she had been incapable even of reflections. All she seemed sensible of was,—that she loved Gideon, that he loved her, that they were both very wicked, that they must never meet again, but that to listen to any other man was odious, impossible to her. She would have pitied Sir Philip with all the tender kindness of her nature, but the contempt with which he had spoken of Gideon had wounded and offended her; and yet she was not without bitter remorse on his account.

Such were the confused emotions, rather than thoughts, that kept hurrying through her brain as she lay, her head buried in the sofa-pillow,

confused, bewildered, like one stupified with excess of pain, till she was aroused by her father opening the door.

She lifted up her head,—she saw him turn round after he had fastened it, approach, and plant himself before her, and she at once read all the anguish, the reproach, the disapprobation, the sorrow, which was written on his countenance.

He did not speak; but he breathed hard, and seemed struggling for words.

Her heart melted within her; and, with an air of grief and humility not to be expressed, she slipped down from her sofa to his feet, embraced his knees, and kissed his hands with such an expression of unfeigned repentance and submission, that, touched to the heart, he stooped down, caught his darling in his arms, and pressed her to his bosom.

Their tears flowed fast as she clasped him round his neck, and covered his cheek, his hands, and the breast of his coat, with her kisses.

She felt herself forgiven; and her heart seemed bursting with gratitude.

"My dear, dear child!" at last he said.

Yes, the holy fountain of his true, honest love

gushed up. It was his Kitty, and he could not retain his anger against her.

"Papa—papa—papa!"

And quite exhausted, she sank, half dying upon his breast.

He lifted her up in his arms, and laid her upon the sofa, and went to fetch water, and gave her some, and waited till she was composed, and then he said,—

"My love, I see it all. You are very sorry for the pain you have given your poor father."

"Sorry!—oh, how sorry! Forgive me, papa; it's not my fault, indeed. I did not know, or I never, never would have been so wicked as to deceive you all. I was quite, quite deceived myself; I thought I should love Sir Philip as I ought. I was not very happy, perhaps; but what did that care?—you would be happy, dear papa. I wanted to make *you* happy; but oh! that fatal —fatal play!"

"Rascal!" muttered Mr. Chandos to himself. He could scarcely help giving vent to the violent indignation he felt against the man who, as he viewed the matter, after having received every sort of obligation from her family, had contrived to make himself master of the affections of this

innocent child, and that in the most artful and insidious manner.

Every sentence which betrayed the artless innocence of poor Celia's heart—ignorant of its own secret, and which, had Gideon possessed what Mr. Chandos called "common honour," would so have happily remained—increased his detestation of what appeared to him the very acmé of domestic treachery.

He was unjust enough, in the rage of his angry feelings, even to advert in thought to her being an heiress, and to commit the unparalleled wrong of suspecting Gideon of interested and ambitious speculations.

His resentment against his daughter had vanished at once at the sight of her air of gentle, humble, and unresisting submission; but as his love and esteem for her returned with all its former strength, so did his indignation against this destroyer of his happiness increase.

"I do not wish, my child," he said, with as much composure as he could command, "to enter into any explanation of events and feelings which I must ever most bitterly, bitterly deplore. I read at once in my Kitty's air that I have no stubborn, rebellious child to deal with, ready to sacrifice the pious duty, ready to forget the tenderness and yearning love of years, for the sake

of a rash prepossession in favour of one, comparatively a stranger—I will not say so utterly unworthy even to approach her, because I know, in the generous simplicity of her feelings, she has forgotten that which every woman of delicacy like hers seems instinctively to remember."

"Papa!" she said, steadily, "I am no rebellious child; I will never, never willingly do that which would give you a moment's pain—far, far less be disobedient to you, even in thought. Oh, papa! . . . But, if you please—if you could be so kind, as not to say any thing again like what you just now said; it gives me such very great pain—indeed it does."

"My love, I can well believe and understand it."

And yet how totally he misunderstood it! He thought it was shame that she felt at having attached herself to one he considered so far beneath her; he little suspected what respect, esteem, and heartfelt tenderness, made these expressions of contempt so cruel.

"My dear, I accept,—I could almost say with tears,—your sweet submission and return to duty,—if, indeed, my darling can be said to have ever wandered, betrayed as you have been,"—his eye was kindling, but he moderated himself,—"surprised into . . . . It is sweet, indeed, my love, to

your poor father's heart to find the esteem he has ever cherished for your purity, your filial piety, and high sense of duty, thus confirmed, even in this dark and stormy moment. Thank you, my darling, for the delight of thus finding you perfect as my proud heart had ever thought you ; I accept at once this sacred pledge, this sweet return to duty and affection. We understand each other perfectly, and need no further explanation."

But while he uttered these few words, with as much calmness as by a violent effort he could assume, how was his heart torn when he looked upon her, shivering, shaking,—pale, haggard ; her eyes red, her lips trembling,—a miserable wreck of the sweet, lovely picture of health and happiness which he had parted with not twenty-four hours before !

His most earnest desire, however, was now to get Gideon out of the house without further delay. To seek him, to give vent to the indignation with which he was filled, and then to banish him from out of that domestic circle where he had been so kindly received, and the happiness of which he had so treacherously destroyed: this was what he was impatient to do, now that the still more intense feeling of anxiety as to the real state of his daughter's feelings was set at rest.

He did feel more relieved than he could express by meeting at once with this unresisting sweetness. Nothing remained, therefore, but to make the severance complete, to drive Gideon from under his roof, and trust to time and change of scene to obliterate the impression of that brief, but fatal, evening.

So he rose from his seat, again kissed his daughter, blessed her, and endeavoured to comfort her with the assurances of his undiminished esteem and affection; and he then was about to leave her.

Her eyes followed him to the door, and as he was about to open it, she called to him, in a low, faltering voice,—

"Papa!"

"What, my darling child?" returning to her immediately, and bending down tenderly to her; "what does my darling want?"

"Papa!"

"My lovely one!"

"Papa! you didn't — you was not — you have been very pitying. You know it's very like being dead — both — we pity the dead — don't say any thing to hurt him — he feels so ——"

"Oh the rascal!" — aside — he could have ground his teeth with rage; but he kept his passion down.

"No, no, no—let me alone—don't make yourself uneasy about *any* thing—let us all forgive and forget—don't vex yourself, my sweet, sweet girl—pray try to compose yourself—how you do tremble!"

"It will be nothing—nothing—thank you, papa—now go—I'll be better in a little while."

Little did he intend to keep the implied promise.

He left the room in a state which rendered him quite unfit to enter into an explanation in that spirit with which every erring man ought to meet an erring fellow-creature under any circumstances, far more in a case like this, where a humane and reflecting man, such as Mr. Chandos usually was, ought to have felt for the unhappy young man, placed, by no fault of his own, under such cruel circumstances of temptation.

Every word Celia had uttered, and even her generous pleadings for him who had occasioned so much misery, only increased a rage almost amounting to fury. He was perfectly blinded with passion, as he hurried on seeking the unfortunate object of his vengeance in every apartment of the house; but in vain.

Where had he hidden himself? Where had he

fled? What did he mean to do? Escape from the just anger of the injured father, and perhaps endeavour to carry on in secret an affair, the exact circumstances of which Mr. Chandos had, after all, not yet had the patience to inquire into; but which his evil imagination painted in the most odious colours?

Having ascertained to a certainty that Gideon was not in the house, and feeling an invincible repugnance to inquire for him — to mention his hated name even to a servant — he sallied forth, searched the gardens, the shrubbery walks, hastened through the woods — and, at length, sitting upon a bench under a tree, in a remote part among the thickets, he spied him.

He hurried up, and addressed him abruptly, saying,—

"I was hunting for you, sir."

"I am sorry I was out of the way, and you have had the trouble."

"Never mind the trouble; I am glad to find you alone, and in a remote place; for I have a word or two to say; and it is as well for us all that those words should be said out of the hearing of others.

"You colour, sir! — Rascal! — scoundrel!" — with a loud burst, almost a roar, of passion; "your villany is painted in your face!"

"Mr. Chandos!——"

Stepping back and looking at him.

"Ay, Mr. Chandos!—don't Mr. Chandos me!—don't fix your audacious looks upon me with that air of pretended astonishment—that Mr. Chandos can for once allow himself to be mastered by a passion of rage too strong for him!—Rascal!—traitor!—villain!—how dared you—base-born—unowned foundling!—how dared you—treacherous, insidious hypocrite!—how dared you—presume to address your vile love-lies—to my daughter?"

The feelings aroused by this violent speech were as violent and indignant as the words addressed to him were cruel.

Pride, scorn, rage, great as his own, shame, hapless love, despairing passion! He was choking for a moment; he could not speak. It seemed as if the convulsions in his breast, the mere physical agitation within, rendered it impossible for him to find a voice: he stepped forward with almost a threatening gesture, and then stood wildly staring before Mr. Chandos.

"Ay, threaten me if you will by your looks; strike at me with your young, strong arm. I am a feeble man; but if it comes to that, I have an arm which never yet quailed before the dastard hypocrite and coward. Yes!—dastard!—coward!

— for when was a sneaking hypocrite any other than a dastard and a coward?"

Choking as he was, these words burst forth,—

"I have done nothing to deserve such treatment—and"—with a tremendous oath—"I will not bear it!"

But the defiance in his face had already sunk into an expression of the blackest despair.

"The Power above — I know not why — has sent me into this world to be an example of misery—such misery!—but he never gave license to other men to trample upon the miserable. If I were a man of equal rank with yourself, instead of the base-born foundling—your own inhuman words represent me—you would not dare to insult me thus—I return your words dastard and coward — trampling upon the fallen!"

These sentences burst forth, rather than were uttered, amid choking convulsions of the chest, which seemed to render distinct articulation almost impossible. They seemed, however, in some measure, to recall Mr. Chandos to his recollection, intoxicated with rage as he was; the reproach struck him; he felt ashamed of the unmanly violence into which he had suffered himself to be betrayed, and said,—

"It is because I abhor domestic treachery that I keep no measures with you!"

Gideon pressed his handkerchief to his lips before he answered, which he did by,—

"I am incapable of domestic treachery. You know I am as incapable of it as yourself. What has passed—for I know what you mean—was no act of treachery; I was—I own it—at one fatal moment, no longer master of myself; but he who has preserved his fidelity to what he thought the obligations of honour, for so many long, long years, does not merit, for one moment's involuntary weakness, to be stigmatised as a traitor."

He put his handkerchief to his lips again.

And then added, in a low, suppressed voice,—

"My secret escaped me—the moment was fatal—we were——"

"Don't couple her in a *we!*" cried Mr. Chandos, almost fiercely.

"I was taken by surprise—I hoped—she had not—no, no—to say so is a base, cowardly lie—I know she did!—I glory in the thought—she did!—it is my pride—my distinction!—my highest—my only honour!—There it is on my heart—I shall carry the impression of it to my grave—Celia!—Celia!"

He seemed quite to forget himself, and in whose presence he was; his eyes were cast up in an almost divine rapture.

Even Mr. Chandos was moved.

"But," said he, in a calmer tone, "are you so absorbed in the selfishness of an unwarrantable passion as not to perceive the infinite mischief you were doing? Had you but had the virtue to abstain, the common virtue to persevere in the silence, you confess you thought it right to impose upon yourself, her tranquillity would have remained undisturbed; you would have preserved your own self-approbation; and she would have been still happy."

Again he pressed his handkerchief to his lips.

"Happy!" he said; "happy!—is she not happy?"

"You *know* she is not," said Mr. Chandos, kindling again; "you know you have robbed her of all that renders woman happy—the tranquillity of her own heart."

"My God!"

"She has refused the man this morning to whom but yesterday I believed her, and she believed herself, virtually engaged, with whom she would have been happy, and all of us happy. Serpent! you have obtruded into our domestic relations, and have poisoned them all; and can you wonder?—can you be surprised"—again lashed into fury at the thought—"that my indignation at such ingratitude—at such boundless audacity!—at such infamous treachery!"——

He might have gone on as long as he pleased; and he did go on heaping opprobrious epithet upon epithet, again completely mastered by his rage and vexation.

Gideon offered no reply.

At the first sentence of this speech, he sank down upon the bench—he rose up—he walked a few paces—he sat down again—he rose up again —his handkerchief still pressed to his lips—his heart bounding with rapture.

"Well, well, have you nothing to say?—then this meeting had better be put an end to—I have spoken to my daughter—we understand each other perfectly—she is every thing a pious child can be—excellent even in her deviation from her better self—I came here"—again resuming a little more self-command—"not to be provoked into the perhaps indecent violence into which I have suffered myself to be betrayed; but simply to express my wish, that you should not again cross my threshold. The measure may seem to you harsh, but, after what has passed, your immediate departure is indispensable. You will quit this park without returning to the house; your things will be sent after you; and the allowance I promised you remitted wherever you will please to direct."

He looked up at this, and speaking with increased difficulty, said,—

"The allowance! That was a degradation I did *not* expect."

"I should be sorry to think that I could cherish feelings of revenge; I would not in essentials injure you. What I promised when I thought differently of you, I am not about to refuse to perform, because——"

"Now," said Gideon, rising indignantly, "I at last comprehend the immensity of the distance you imagine that lies between us. At last I understand the source of that ecstasy of rage which has seemed to me, I own it, unworthy of Mr. Chandos. Now I can measure the contempt with which prosperity looks down upon misfortune; the pride with which the high-born regard the basely sprung——"

"What do you mean by all this?"

"I mean that if you could conceive it possible, after what has passed, that were I gnawing the end of an old glove for hunger I would accept even a morsel of dry bread from you; I do not wonder at your fury upon the subject of your daughter!"

Again he pressed his handkerchief firmly to his lips.

The handkerchief that was becoming already ruddy with *scarlet* — blood — he would rather have died than seemed to appeal to the compassion or forbearance of Mr. Chandos by betraying this appalling symptom of bodily illness. He turned away, and slowly walking along the path which led from the house, was soon lost amid the thickets through which it winded.

He left Mr. Chandos more dissatisfied with himself than ever he had been in his life before, ashamed of his unmanly passion, of his cruel violence. The reaction in the heart of a reasonable, just, and right-minded man, after such an exhibition of human infirmity, is, indeed, one of the most painful, but perhaps one of the most useful, experiences in human life. Teaches us our own inherent weakness, and our extreme need of far higher principles of self-government than those commonly adopted by men of the world,—of the necessity of seeking sources of strength far more efficacious than those commonly sought for—to preserve us from the most lamentable deviations from our own foregone ideas of right when exposed to sudden and violent temptation.

CHAPTER XII.

"The rose withers, the blossom blasteth,
The flower fades, the morning hasteth,
The sun sets, the shadow flies,
The gourd consumes, the man he dies."

SIMON WASTILL.

LORD AVONMORE sat in his cabinet.

A chamber surrounded with his shelves, his pigeon-holes, his drawers, in which the almost innumerable packets of official papers were arranged with a method and exactness which was one among his many means of extraordinary success in the conduct of business.

His apartment was a sort of type of his intellect. In that large chamber of thought, ideas, recollections, plans, were arranged with the same mighty power of reducing an almost boundless variety into system and order. Every thing in its several chambers, be it of the actual or the visionary, was in its place, and every place richly and amply furnished. All was as it should be,—

every idea well arranged, and ready to be called forth on the moment as occasion required,—supplying ample subject-matter,—for powers of reasoning and eloquence which were never found at fault.

The intellectual chamber of the soul was richly set out,—adorned with all that nature could bestow, or an industry beyond example, and a power of memory that bordered upon the incredible, bring together. But how was it with the soul's other chamber—the heart?

How had it gone there, while all the mighty force of an almost resistless will had been devoted to these intellectual victories? He was not a cold, passionless man, utterly devoid of a heart, whatever his conduct had been. Nature had been as prodigal in warm sensibilities, in ardent passions—even in those sweeter and better gifts, strong affections—as she had been in the gifts of the mind; but what a scene of ruin and desolation would the analysis of that heart, as it now was, have revealed!

Early profligacy had destroyed the finer essences. That diviner spirit which exalts and spiritualises the passions of the human heart of love had perished under the indulgences of the senses. Ambition, covetous desire of worldly possessions, had smothered the higher and warmer affections;

and tender sensibilities had died away in the egotism of a constant regard to self-interest.

The heart might be compared to a fair field, over which the whirlwind and the storm, and the more fatal influences of the burning drought or the icy north wind, had passed; and all was barrenness and desolation. But, as in some mighty ruin defaced, not adorned by time,—as in some corner of the wilderness over which the simoom blows and the blinding white sand heaps itself, one or two verdant spots may yet be found round which the traveller fondly lingers,—all was not quite dead within.

There were hopes—ardent hopes, or, rather, insatiable desires; and there were passages in the life that was gone that were not yet forgotten. The desire that could not be overcome was—to be blest in his sons; the passage that would not be obliterated was—the brief episode of his love for Miriam.

I have related the intense wish he had to be succeeded in the honours he had heaped around him by a son worthy of him. He could not be satisfied, like many other fathers, by the mere possession, in a son and heir, of some handsome, fashionable, idle, extravagant, good-tempered, young man, much more elegant, well-dressed, and more practised in the life of the great world than

his father had pretended to be before him; he yearned for something greater, nobler, better: a man like him could not be satisfied thus. Though still under fifty years of age, his spirits and strength were beginning to give way. Exhausted by the excitements of a life divided between the wildest dissipation and the almost incredible exertions of ambition, he felt his powers already slowly, but gradually, beginning to decline, and a premature decay already turning his summer leaf to sere.

He began to long for the calm delights of home,—that something which alone satisfies the soul yearning for more substantial enjoyment than the hurry of the world supplies. Under the utter failure of all expectation of finding happiness in his wife, his heart called for it—longed for it, in a son.

He had two, as I have told you,—fine, handsome youths they were, both of them; the father's and the mother's beauty was united. They were extremely admired wherever they went, and the pride and leaders of the public school where they had been educated. They revelled in every pleasure, were unbounded in their expenses,—luxurious, selfish, and without the least pretence to right principles of any kind; but they were gay, good-tempered, and liberal of their own inexhaustible means to any body who chose to flatter and follow

them.—They were called thoroughly good-natured fellows by the indiscriminating lads with whom they were surrounded.

Every thing had been done for them which money alone could do for any one. All those advantages accumulated around them which gold can purchase, but they were exposed to all those temptations and dangers which gold inevitably brings in its train.

The result was what might have been expected. And now, as this eminent statesman, and great and most successful man, sat in his private cabinet, his head resting upon his hand, his countenance worn with care and anxiety, what was the subject which occupied his thoughts and clouded his brow? What but the misconduct of his sons?

The eldest, a boy of considerable talents, had run far, far out of the course, and had ended a youth of the most reckless extravagance by making a worthless marriage with a woman older than himself by many years, and whose experience in vice had enabled her to take advantage of the vicious propensities of others. She had ruined him, and duped him into the sacrifice of his life to one utterly unworthy, by her previous career, to be entitled to any such sacrifice; and what rendered the sting more bitter was the conviction upon Lord Avonmore's mind, that opposition to

himself, a wayward spirit of defiance against his authority, perhaps too severely exercised—if, in such a case, that be possible—had driven this rash and violent youth into an act to be repented of during the whole of his existence. The younger son, his Eugene, his favourite—as far as he had time to have a favourite,—the one with talents, perhaps, still more brilliant than those of his brother, he had hoped, and intended to prepare, to follow in his own footsteps, occupying, as a preliminary, the place of his own private secretary.

To this prospect he had looked forward with a satisfaction scarcely to be described. As his own strength and faculties declined, he looked forward to being supported by the abilities and affection of a son in whom he would place unbounded confidence, and whom he would thus prepare to receive his descending mantle, as had been the lot of some few great men more fortunate in this than the rest.

But he "reckoned without his host," as people say. Eugene felt little affection for the father who had been almost a stranger to him in the endearing years of infancy. Gay, brilliant, and volatile; a friend of all that was new, plausible, and uncompromising, he rather despised than reverenced the cautious wisdom of the hoary statesman; laughed at his "governor"—hateful word!

—with his young friends, and refused to take the slightest interest in plans or views so commonplace and so *slow*. He, moreover, had never been trained to regular industry; the routine of business was hateful, was impossible, to him. After a few weeks' trial, he had just written to his father a letter full of wit, but wanting in reason, resigning the honourable post he occupied in the mighty minister's cabinet, and declaring that he was off for foreign travel; to which scheme he dutifully asked his father's consent, as undutifully giving it plainly to be understood that, with or without it, his mind was made up. Utterly heartless, this talented, gay young fellow was, perhaps, not more profligate and unprincipled than his father had been in his day, but certainly with more levity and want of feeling,—and levity is almost more dangerous, because often more incorrigible, than vice.

Eugene was beloved and admired wherever he went. His spirits were too gay and his temper too easy for him not to be thought the best fellow in the world; so he broke with his father, and disappointed all his projects and expectations, without the slightest feeling of regret, far less of remorse,—only thinking that he was doing the most reasonable thing in the world, and a good deal pleased with his own spirit and courage in

breaking through all these nursery trammels, as he called them, imposed by his governor.

I could scarcely have believed, if I had not known it, that such a man as Lord Avonmore, so hackneyed in the world's ways, apparently so chilled in his affections, so governed by motives of ambition or interest, could have felt, as he did feel, the *unkindness* of his son.

And all this while there was his other son, his eldest born,—the one whom all the claims of conscience and justice ought to have made the inheritor of his hard-earned honours,—the son whose talents would have illustrated, whose vigour and spirit enhanced upon his own career, with a heart formed for every generous affection,—grateful, docile, affectionate, loving,—his son, the son for whom he languished,—the son whose possession he would have esteemed and valued far beyond an imperial crown!—that son!—

Where was he? . . . .

Friendless—heartbroken; mastered at last by the force of circumstances and the weakness of a too tender, grateful, and feeling heart; exhausted by the incredible efforts he had made with himself, intellectually, to do justice to the pains taken for his advantage by strangers, on whom he had no claim—morally, to subdue a passion which he felt it would be the height of ingratitude to indulge;

his heart torn to pieces by all those distracting agonies which, in a young man of his age and his sensibility, attend upon sudden rupture of every tie which had bound him to her he loved—His physical strength giving way under these accumulated distractions, and the scarlet blood from time to time slowly welling from his lips, behold him, young, talented, excellent, a victim of those vices which had deprived him of every natural support and protection, and forced him into circumstances so uncongenial, so disastrous; see him slowly walking through that wood, a miserable, solitary being, in a world which ought to have been all hope and promise for one so gifted, so excellent as he!

Oh, could his father but have seen him!

Often and often, in the dreary solitude of his heart, had Lord Avonmore yearned for that Miriam, the only one who had ever loved him as he wished to be loved,—as deserved the name of love. Often and often did he recall that night when, in the gleaming moonbeam, he saw her, vivid as if in actual existence, the water streaming from her long hair and garments, with the baby at her bosom which she had laid, trembling, at his feet.

Never, never could he forget the revulsion of feeling when his wife, in her harsh voice, had ex-

claimed, as he pointed, distractedly, to the white object which lay there,—

"Oh my lace shawl! How careless of Lydia!"

Type, he thought, of their destiny. Thus had she dissipated all his most sacred visions, and changed the phantoms of his affections into the most insignificant trifles of the world.

Oh, could he have known that this very hour, when there he sat, cut to the heart by the unkindness of Eugene, there was another son, — a better son,—the best and most noble of sons, there slowly walking, heartbroken—ay, really heartbroken—with the blood slowly welling from the ruptured artery within his bosom, longing, as a last consolation, for a parent's bosom upon which to rest his weary head.

Oh, could he have known it!

Mr. Chandos returned home with a pace nearly as slow. For the first time in his life, perhaps, thoroughly ashamed and out of humour with himself.

His eyes were opened; and though certainly not in the least the more inclined to bestow his daughter in a manner so far beneath her, — and, like other parents, who have forgotten their own

love passages as one forgets a morning dream, little inclined to attach much importance to feelings which time inevitably must dissipate — so time be allowed. He felt ashamed of the pride and abominable haughtiness which had led him thus to despise the friendless, and trample upon the unfortunate.

Then conscience spoke — then his active mind painted himself, acting under the reverse of his conduct. Filled with compassion for so natural and hopeless a passion; with candid indulgence for the momentary weakness into which that passion had been betrayed; with esteem for the strength of character which held it subdued so long, and with admiration for all the generous fervour which had striven so nobly, and succeeded so well, in resisting the various temptations which beset all youths, and more especially a youth of sensibility like his. He pictured himself thus actuated, thus just, thus candid, thus righteous and forgiving,—kindly, gently, temperately explaining the reasons of his conduct, and the necessity for the severity he was exercising. Softening to this young susceptible heart the bitterness of mortification, and the pain of a final rupture, by the offer of his friendship and the assurance of his esteem; and begging, as the greatest favour he could himself receive, and as

the proof of the most generous magnanimity upon Gideon's part, to be allowed the *consolation* of still ministering to his improvement, though it was impossible for him to minister to his happiness.

I know nothing that more awfully prepares us for the final dread account when all is fixed—all irretrievable,—when life is past, and neither retribution to be offered, nor atonement made, than this comparison which the awakened conscience draws between what we *might* have done and what we *have* done.

Mr. Chandos was thoroughly humbled; and I hope it will be some atonement in your eyes, for the faults of this erring man, that he was capable of being so thoroughly humbled by the sense of his own secret errors. So long as this disposition to self-inquisition exists, the good Angel, be sure, has not forsaken the man.

As he approached the house, however, old anxieties revived, and he began to think less of himself and of Gideon, as he thought more of his daughter.

He longed to visit her again. But how should he meet her eye? her last earnest words now were ringing in his ears—her sweet, submissive look, and yet the fervent eyes with which she had begged, more than by words, for patience and

consideration of her lover's feelings, the only stipulation she had made, or rather implied, in return for the generous sacrifice of all her own feelings to her father's judgment and wishes. And what return had he made?

Oh, how grateful he felt! — true dastard as his conscience had made him — that she had not heard, that she never would know what had passed, or how harsh and cruel he had been!

He felt that there is one whom nature has made dearer than a parent,—and that much, and gratefully, and piously, as she loved him, the knowledge of his injustice to that one would be a trial that not all her filial love, her gratitude, her piety, could resist.

And yet, not to go to her, under the anxiety which he knew she must be suffering as to the result of their interview — not at once to annihilate all the fond flatteries of hope, those alternations of feelings — by the intelligence that all was over, and Gideon gone—he felt would be equally cruel and unwise.

So walking still more slowly, to collect his hurried and agitated thoughts, he at last made his way to her room.

He opened the door gently, thinking she might, perhaps, after her excessive agitation, be fallen asleep; but she was on her knees in a remote

corner, with a book before her, and at prayer. She rose as she heard a hand upon the lock of the door, and turned round with an eye purified from passion, and a countenance serene, though grave, nay, very sad; but seeing her father, she came up to him, and tried to smile gently, as she took his hand without speaking.

The effort was too great, the tears swelled into her eyes — without convulsion or passion — they rose like the rise of gentle waters from the heaving ocean below.

He looked at her, and his heart smote him. Not for her — not for the exacted sacrifice which he believed to be necessary and right, but for the contrast which this self-command—this regard for others — this beautiful calm of a resolved heart, afforded to the disgraceful passion to which he had given way.

"My love, I think it right to tell you at once what I have done; and then let this painful subject be laid at rest. I have had an explanation with Mr. Jones—and he is gone!"

"Papa — I am sure you have been so good as to keep — not your promise — oh, no! — I had no right to exact one, — but — I am afraid — I think the best people are sometimes — sometimes — unjust,—no, no—but not quite right — in feeling for these — these sort of — I mean that there is often such suffering . . . . ."

"Yes, my darling,—and you, young inexperienced creatures believe such sufferings will last for ever; but *we* know they will not; depend upon it, my dear, there never was yet a wound of this kind which time did not heal. Do not think it unfeeling of me, Kitty——"

For her countenance became troubled.

"And yet, my darling, you cannot perhaps help it, because you are young and cannot believe—what I, who am old, tell you assuredly will take place."

And surely to true, earnest, faithful youth, nothing is so dreadful as such an assurance upon the part of cold, practical age. A heart like Celia's would, with far less pain, receive the assurance that it must eternally suffer than that it must inevitably change—forget. Oh! that is death, and worse than death! We lose faith in all things—in our own identity—in hope—in heaven—if persuaded we shall change.

No true love ever believed in this change.

It is certain Celia did not. She was only grieved to hear her father thus almost blaspheme against her most sacred feelings.

"I don't know—I am young. I don't pretend to say how it must be,—but pray tell me—for there are a few things I must know before I can rest—how did he go away? in sorrow or in anger?"

"In anger!" said her father, the old demon of pride again rising up at the thought. "In anger! — that *would* have been a strange feeling upon his part."

She mused, but made no reply.

"Then I hope — I do hope — that the plan — that he will allow — I mean that you will be so kind as to——"

"Continue the allowance I promised him? Most assuredly, Kitty, if he will allow me——"

"Ah! No, no,—I understand—he is not likely to do that."

"He will not, however, be destitute," said her father, in hopes to satisfy her feelings in some degree; "he has his fellowship."

"Oh, thank you for reminding me. Yes—yes —and for the rest . . . ."

"We must see what can be done through Calantha. To tell you the truth, my love, I do not think he will accept a favour from me. You know we have never been particularly good friends; and what has passed will not, can not, make us better. But depend upon it, my love, for my own satisfaction, as well as yours, I will make every effort in every way to forward his interests; and much may be done through the medium of Calantha."

"And shall we ever hear of him?"

"Ah, Kitty! Is this weakness worthy of you? No, my dear, not at present — not till time has done his work with us all — *then* we may hear of him. And I trust we shall hear that he is a thriving lawyer, travelling his circuit duly, and duly laying in his five or six thousand a-year."

This speech did, as it was intended to do, more to disenchant her than any her father had yet made.

Her judgment assented to the hope, and to the probability of the picture. Yes, he would soon be absorbed in his profession — would prosper and forget her,—and she would try to forget him, if she could but be sure he was prosperous and happy. It was because he was unhappy, trampled upon, and despised, that she had felt that divine pity which had grown into so tender a love. When she thought of him as independent, rich, and honoured, she thought she could remember him without pain.

She sighed.

"Are you satisfied, my love?" he said, kindly and anxiously. "Does not your own heart and conscience tell you, my dear girl, that this is the course I ought to pursue? Be reasonable, my own love. Is it not the only one that is right— the only one that is possible?"

"I believe so," she said, and sighed.

"And now, my dear, you will make an effort with yourself, and come down — will you not? We must have some regard to proper opinion. Sir Philip is gone; we have the house to ourselves. The time, I trust, will soon come, when we may venture to speak upon this subject without awakening feelings that must be forgotten. I will tell you from time to time how our friend fares in his new career; for I know that, as his friend and well-wisher, you will always feel glad to know. Thus far it will be natural and right to indulge feelings so perfectly within the control of reason; and now, my love," kissing her kindly, "can you tell me you will make yourself easy?"

"I hope so—I shall try—I shall pray. There will be strength given because I hope and trust —dear, dear papa. A child is surely right in giving up every thing rather than prove ungrateful to a father's boundless kindness."

"I would rather it were given up, dear as this dutiful sacrifice is to me, from regard to your own judgment and dignity."

She shook her head.

Idle word that of dignity seemed to her weighed against happiness.

"You *must* see it in that light, Kitty, if you will but reflect."

"Perhaps—I am sure I ought, if I could, dear papa. I only wish to be every thing you desire."

"You are my gentle angel," cried he, fondly embracing her, "and may the Great Father of the universe bless and reward thy pious heart with all His choicest blessings.

"Farewell for the present, beloved daughter of my soul. Come down soon,—this dark day is drawing to an end."

CHAPTER XIII.

"Farewell — farewell, thou golden prime,
Thou sunburst of my youth . . . . .
Oh! radiant time, thou com'st not back
From out the vanish'd years."

C. W. Bennett.

Gideon went to London, where, in a small, obscure lodging, such as the slender income derived from his fellowship would allow, he put himself under medical treatment; and while commanded to keep himself perfectly quiet, and abstain from every exertion, he began to gather his law-books about him, and opened his "Blackstone."

He was of a strong and determined mind, and had been early taught the necessity — and had early been obliged to learn that hard lesson — to endure. It cannot be called a disappointment, far less a mortification, that he had been called upon to suffer. It was rather that terrific shock

which the soul experiences when it has been for a moment raised to a pitch of ecstasy, and is as suddenly dashed downwards into the depths of hopeless despair.

The conviction that Celia loved him ; that rapturous, intoxicating conviction, which had flashed upon him in one bright, exulting moment, which had for a few brief hours produced such a delirious ecstasy of happiness, that all thought and reflection were banished — had faded as the dreams of that excited night passed away ; and with the morning had come the certainty, that the very love thus suddenly betrayed to each other would be the cause of their immediate, probably eternal, separation. That Mr. Chandos would ever allow the smallest hope to be entertained, or that Celia would fly into open rebellion against the father she loved and honoured beyond words, were equally impossible; he could not even wish, he could not even desire her so to deviate from the angelic goodness of her character which had made her the idol of his heart.

But to find himself thus at once cut off, driven away, — not allowed once to see her, or even to hope to see her again, — to be parted thus violently, and all the innumerable ties that bound her to his heart ruptured with so much cruelty, was a suffering almost too great to be endured.

But he did endure it. He struggled for, and he attained to, the appearance of outward tranquillity, at least; and well acquainted with his own temper, and certain that nothing but the most strenuous application to business could restore him to himself, he plunged into the study of the law with an avidity which threatened to undo all that his wise and kind physician was endeavouring to do for him, and complete the ruin of his failing health.

He had written to Calantha and to Mr. Prior. To the first he had frankly confessed the truth of what had passed; to the other he spoke only of his resolution to embrace the law as his profession.

Calantha answered with all the tenderness of a mother; but it was impossible not to discover by her letters how grievously she felt the disappointment and mortification Mr. Chandos had experienced — the destruction of the happy prospects opening for Celia; and how painful the idea was to her, that Gideon should be the unhappy cause of all this confusion and unhappiness!

She made him the kindest and most liberal offers with respect to an allowance, and the hundred-guinea fee for the special-pleader's office; but he, well knowing that the money could not be her own, and suspecting the source from which it

might be derived, steadily refused her assistance, and assured her, that with his fellowship he should get on very well. To enter a special-pleader's office was, however, impossible; he strove by his own exertions to make up for the disadvantage; but, alas! there are disadvantages which the most strenuous exertions cannot altogether overcome; and this was one. Then his slender means of purchasing law books were soon exhausted; he had to borrow, and to copy, and make extracts, and perform those incredible feats of labour which some of our greatest luminaries at the bar have so triumphantly effected.

But his cheek grew paler and thinner; the discharge of blood from the lungs would at intervals return; the battle was beyond his strength. He seemed fated to prove a sad example of the consequences of evil rather than a triumphant spectacle of the final victory of good.

There he sits.

It is a dark, low room, in an obscure streeet, which he occupies; and the heavy air presses upon his feverish temples and his heavily-loaded chest. His hair is dishevelled, and thrown back from his too delicately white, high, and intellectual forehead, round which the lines of sickness are drawn; his large eyes—his earnest expression —his beautiful and only too finely cut features—

his white, thin hand — the slight stoop in his young figure—alas! he is not yet two-and-twenty — all, to the experienced eye of the physician, who now enters the room, give piteous signals of approaching decline.

He sits in an old, uneasy, horse-hair arm-chair; and a little table before him, covered with a bit of old green baize, is loaded with law-books; he is reading intently.

He looked up, however, as the door opened; and, rising from his chair, held out that thin, hot hand to his friend and physician — the only friend he had in that great town.

"This will never, never do, my good sir," said Doctor Munro, shaking his head. "We *must* get you out of this. This room is stifling you to death, and these law-books will be the death of you if you do not mend your manners. I positively must insist upon these studies being abandoned for a time."

"You would not insist upon that, or anything of the sort, my dear doctor, if you knew how refreshing this sort of mental exertion is to me. *Violent* work seems the only element in which I can live; so pray do not forbid it. Every breathing thing can exist only upon condition of enjoying its own element — this is mine."

"Well, then, I see no hope for you; you must

die, as many an incomparable young fellow I have seen die in my day, of the disease of over-work. My dear boy, this very necessity for violent labour, as you justly call it, is one symptom of the disease. Either the overstrained brain is the victim of a feverish and unnatural excitement — as is yours, and far the most dangerous case—or it sinks into indolence and apathy, which is safer, and most to be desired of the two. Come, come, shut up your books for once, and go out with me. I am going to Hampstead, and whilst I visit my patient, you shall take a turn upon the Heath."

"That is too tempting an offer to be refused," said Gideon, shutting his books; and he and the good doctor set forwards together.

It was a beautiful day, and the sun shone upon the many groves, and pretty white villas, and all the rich scenery of Hampstead; and the soft wind blew deliciously over the sandy knolls of the Heath, wagging the tops of the little blue-bells and yellow hawkweed, whilst the stone-chat ran up and down amid the pebbles, and the little grey and white wagtail scudded by the little glittering water-pools,— the view stretched upon all sides in its rich magnificence.

The doctor turned Gideon out of his carriage when they had ascended the hill, and bade him meet him again at the Spaniards' in an hour's

time. An hour, therefore, he had to himself, and sweet to his melancholy was the calm that surrounded him. The blue sky overhead — the heathy expanse around — the groups of shrubberies, with their pyramidical evergreens, looking almost like palm-trees in an Eastern picture — the children with their donkeys and nursery-maids—the laundresses with their bleaching linen — and all the busy tranquillity of that lovely scene.

His chest seemed to expand, his temples to cool, and his spirits to rise under the influence.

Sometimes he walked, and sometimes he sat down upon the sandy little hills, and he would think of the past with less pain under the sweet influences of the lovely landscape and most lovely day.

He was walking in this way along a little path across the Heath, just marked out by a little finer grass and a narrow line in the purple heath, his eyes bent on the ground, musing, when he ran against another man who seemed as absent as himself, and, raising his eyes to make an apology, whom should they fall upon but Mr. Abel?

"Mr. Abel!"

"Mr. Gideon, for I protest I can't help always using that name!"

"You here!"

"And you here!"

"I was thinking you must have been at Oxford; but no, no, your triumphs there are completed, we all know that;" and taking his hand, and shaking it cordially, "I heartily congratulate you!"

"And I was thinking you never could be induced to come so far south; but I am very glad indeed to meet you, Mr. Abel!"

"Oh! fond as we are of the north, we should all travel south readily enough with such a powerful inducement for moving as was held out to me. Why, man, the fickle goddess of the turning-wheel has at length turned her wheel my way—bother the metaphor, never mind! In plain words, my quondam pupil, who is now so very great a man, after having forgotten me for a score of years, has suddenly, it would seem, recalled me to his recollection. He wrote to offer me a very good living in this neighbourhood, and here I am! Should be quite happy, only that one longs for the mountains; and here I come to get a breeze now and then. It's a pretty sort of a thing; but it's a mere mole-hill —a mere mole-hill after all."

"I heartily congratulate you, Mr. Abel! and I am glad to hear that Lord Avonmore has remembered you at last."

"Why, faith, he has! and, moreover, he seems on a sudden to have taken quite a fancy to me; but, trust me for one thing, there's nothing like present vexations for reminding one of old friends; and if I may trust my old skill in physiognomy, Lord Avonmore has had his share of such things in spite of all his prosperity. Ah, my young friend, you have not quite lost that bligh of his, but you are not so like him as you were. You're more like your mother — bless me, what was I saying? — what a fool I am! — I mean the poor girl there — poor Miriam!"

Gideon said,—

"You cannot think what strange feelings you give me, Mr. Abel, when you speak in this way! It is a painful subject, you know, with a man so unfortunate as myself."

"Well, well, I beg your pardon. I set you against Lord Avonmore, I believe, once by telling you a history of one of his pranks when he was a lad not much older than yourself; but one must forget these things some time or other—and after all his goodness to me, of course, I wish so to do; but, someway, it's got into his head again, and he seems at times very low — these great men are given to it, I believe — and then nothing will serve him but I must come and talk to him about old times, and the mountains, and our walks

when he was my pupil; and then I describe over again those mountains, and dales, and lakes, and dwell on their beauties and glories. I declare to you it's like David piping to gloomy king Saul—all his evil fancies seem to dissipate. But he never speaks to me of Miriam, though I know he's longing to do it, and we shall come to that some time or other; but, poor soul! I can tell him little about her that he does not know already himself. But how I talk! Well, and what are you doing with yourself, Mr. Gideon?"

Gideon described his position and his plans, as far as he thought proper to satisfy Mr. Abel's curiosity; and then, finding by his watch it was time to meet the good doctor, gave Mr. Abel his card and left him.

It was quite true, as Mr. Abel had said, in the caprices of that melancholy to which he was every day becoming more and more subject, the thoughts of Lord Avonmore had turned more and more towards the north. The image of Miriam had become more and more persistent; and at length from Miriam he had turned to Abel. He wrote to offer him a vacant living which he had at his disposal, and which would bring him to the neighbourhood of London.

Abel accepted, and came to return thanks to his patron. From this one interview a renewal

of the old intimacy had sprung up. There was that about Abel upon which this eminent man seemed to find it a comfort to recline. An old nurse—an old tutor, is not merely like any other friend; they are almost as parents—in some cases almost more dear than parents.

The pride of Lord Avonmore, which forbade him to confess his secret unhappiness to any living creature, rendered this relation with the singular, the simple, the learned Abel, quite a relief.

He was so much less, and he was so much more, than his old pupil, that comparisons were out of the question; and that easy simplicity, which breaks at once through all the icy barriers which surround grandeur, is—so pride be not offended by the familiarity—the most endearing and attaching of all qualities to those thus hedged round, as it were, and separated from human communion and sympathy.

Like David to the gloomy king he had indeed been, without exciting those fatal feelings of jealousy which rendered powerless the divine harpings of the accomplished son of Jesse. Confidence ensued, and Abel was now in the secret of all Lord Avonmore's sufferings about his family and of that bitterest of all his disappointments —the defection of Eugene.

Not long after the meeting at Hampstead the great man and his friend were sitting together, when, after a good deal of confidential discourse upon the subject of Eugene, and upon the difficulty of choosing a private secretary whom he could endure to supply his place — for in the matter of private secretary the unhappy and irritable man was become dreadfully exacting, Mr. Abel suddenly broke out,—

"I have it! That's exactly the thing to suit your lordship."

"What?"

"Why, such a find! I met him upon Hampstead Heath not three days ago; and he's the very fellow for you, and I think he'll come."

"Who are you speaking of, Abel? Do be brief for once, my dear fellow."

"Why, your lordship must have heard of the young man who distinguished himself so this year at Oxford."

"Yes, I think I did. I recollect, prize poem and prize essay, and double-first. Jones — ay, that's the name. Who is he?"

"Yes, sir, I happen to know something about him. Yes, Jones is the name he goes by; but, poor fellow! unluckily it's for want of a better, for he has got no right properly to any name."

"An illegitimate child?"

"Worse,—a foundling!"

"A foundling! Who found him, and how got he to Oxford?"

"He was laid at the door of one of our great north-country squire's house, and they picked him up. There chanced to be a sick daughter in that family who could never marry, and she took the child and gave him an education. I happen to knew something of the man who brought him up—he *is* a rare fellow! I don't wonder the lad made something out; and he's as fine a young man to look at, too, as your lordship might wish to see; and, if I might take the liberty to say so, so like what your lordship once was ——"

"Ha!"

"That I don't wonder he proves as clever as he is. I have always observed that where there was a resemblance in the face and person there was usually as singular a resemblance in the capacity and temper; but this is an excellent young fellow, I believe."

"The resemblance, you mean to say, fails there—eh, Abel?"

"My lord, I beg your pardon."

"Oh, no pardon!" said Lord Avonmore, haughtily. "I never set myself up for a puritan. But this young man—what's all this for?"

"Why, my lord, he's studying at the bar, and it's plain he's not much to depend upon. I don't know how it is, but he seems to have been discarded by the Mordaunts—that's the name—though he says no, and that they do all, and would do more for him if he would allow it; but he's living in close lodgings, and working beyond his strength; and I think, my lord, to let a fine being like this perish for want of a little timely assistance is not only an injury to your own self, but an injury to his country."

"I agree with you as to the country; as to self, not. What would you have me do?"

"Why, my lord, you want a private secretary."

Lord Avonmore flinched, as if wounded by some sharp instrument.

"Painful—very painful; but I really think, my lord, if you would suffer me to introduce this Mr. Jones to you, you would find in him what you are wanting—fine manners, great abilities, sense, temper, fidelity, and principles of virtue and honour, which make any man a treasure, my lord."

"You think so. Bring him to me. A foundling, and of what age?"

"Two-and-twenty next September, as near as one can guess, for it was in September he was found."

"Ha! ha!"

"A poor girl, who they thought must have been the child's mother, was found next morning drowned in a pool not far from the house. A very handsome creature, poor thing!—and that's all that was ever known of him or his."

"Ah! ——"

Mr. Abel had departed—Ridley was left alone.

He sat, his head resting upon his hand, deep in thought.

So like himself! Two-and-twenty—the very year! Drowned—drowned—the very month—maybe the very hour when that dreary apparition seemed to stand in the moonlight at the foot of the bed! Oh, might it—might it be his!—his! But how recognise him—how identify him—how assure himself? Oh, harassing uncertainty!—rending hope!—agonising expectation!

What hours were those which succeeded!

Locked up in his own apartment—every one forbidden to approach, whether upon business public or private—pacing that room—all evening—all night!

The morning found the father almost as pale, haggard, and extenuated, as was his hapless son.

He ordered himself to be denied to every per-

son whatever, except to Mr. Abel and to a gentleman he would bring with him.

One o'clock was the appointed hour.

One o'clock struck!

Lord Avonmore seated himself upon the chair, and in the place where he was accustomed to give audience to all applicants; and strove to rouse all that was man within him to meet the approaching moment with calmness.

To expose himself to the degradation of yielding to emotion before a stranger was what his dignity forbade; and, spite of those mysterious yearnings of the heart which swelled within, his reason told him that this young man, in all probability, was, and would prove, a stranger.

To meet him with dignity — to repress the workings of anxiety and the intensity of hope — calmly to meet the disappointment which his reason assured him must be the result of this meeting; for this he was nerving himself with all his acquired philosophy and natural strength of mind.

He heard a knock at the door. The hall-door opens — some one is admitted — there are the feet of two persons upon the stairs — Lord Avonmore's hand is pressed against his heart, where he feels

a strong intense pain; and then it is removed and laid upon the table beside him; and there he sits with it resting upon the table, his figure drawn up, but leaning a little forward, his eyes fixed upon the opening door.

Mr. Abel comes in first, and is followed by Gideon.

Lord Avonmore looks earnestly at him for a moment, the hand which lies upon the table may be seen to tremble violently, and he for a second remains as if turned to stone where he sat.

Then, slowly rising, he advanced, gave his hand to Mr. Abel, and distantly saluting the young man whom Mr. Abel immediately presented to him, pointed to two chairs, and resumed his own in silence.

The silence lasted for about a minute, during which Gideon, with a strange confusion of feeling, gazed with intense interest upon the noble figure before him.

Advancing years, high intellectual avocations, the exercise of authority, and the deep intensity of feeling, whether for evil or good, had added the grace of majesty to the extraordinary personal beauty which had always distinguished Ridley. There was a nobility in his lofty air and figure, a piercing brightness in his eye, and the deep lines of thought upon his brow, which, blended

with an undefinable expression of melancholy, rendered his appearance at once eminently striking and deeply interesting.

Gideon regarded him with an admiration with which the recollection of those wrongs,—which he, at least, felt to be inexpiable and unpardonable,—mingled a strange feeling of abhorrence; he gazed with an awestruck gravity upon this monument of wickedness in glory.

As the great Satan appeared to the sublime imagination of Milton, so shone this great and bad man before the pure eye of his son.

"I sent for you, Mr. Jones, for that I believe is your name——"

"The name I go by," said Gideon, in a low, respectful, but firm and collected voice.

"The name you go by — by the recommendation of our mutual friend Mr. Abel. He has led me to hope that the proposal I have a design to make may not be unacceptable to you; he has led me to believe that, if accepted, it would prove a source of future satisfaction to myself. Yesterday I hoped this — now — now — now I feel sure of it."

He spoke evidently with the greatest effort and difficulty — his lips slightly quivered; but he forced himself to be composed and calm.

Gideon bowed.

"Mr. Abel has, perhaps, communicated my intentions?'

"No, my lord," said Abel, bluntly; "I thought it would be better you should see him first yourself."

"Mr. Abel, it has always been my opinion, and my practice has been in accordance with it, that business is best transacted between the principals without the presence of third persons. I have found this habit of mine advantageous to all parties. If you please to step into my library, and look over the new edition of Herodotus, yet uncut, which my bookseller sent me yesterday, I will feel obliged to you."

"Quite true, my lord; I never can say what I want to say, especially when I'm a little nervous, before any body. I'll go and look at the Herodotus with pleasure. Where did your lordship say?"

"You will find the book lying upon the right-hand slab as you enter the room."

Mr. Abel rose up, went out, but forgot to shut the door after him; upon which Lord Avondale rose quietly, crossed the room, shut the door, tried the lock, to assure himself that it was fastened, and then returned to his place.

The departure of Mr. Abel seemed to have relieved him from the constrained necessity of being

obliged to speak. He sat some time in silence, his eyes bent on the ground, as if musing, while Gideon regarded him fixedly, almost sternly.

He felt himself in the presence of one who had betrayed the innocent and wronged the defenceless; and the more striking the exhibition of unquestionable power expressed in the lofty countenance of Lord Avonmore, the more strongly did the figure of the lovely, young, defenceless girl — with whose story he had identified that of his own drowned mother—rise up in painful contrast.

He felt not the slightest awe or apprehension before this great and lofty man — indignation, deep indignation, levels all distinctions.

Then Lord Avonmore lifted up his eyes, gazed at him earnestly—scrutinisingly—piercingly, while the hand again shook till it rattled against the the table. At last he said,—

"Tell me — I have heard your story — your mother, they say, was drowned—on what night?"

"The 10th of September, 17—"

The hand was lifted up, and struck down again against the table.

Then the face of that great statesman grew deadly pale; and, in a voice scarcely audible, he faltered out,—

"You are sure—you are sure——"

"Yes, my lord."

But Gideon was beginning to shiver. The emotion was infectious.

"She died and left you a poor infant at the door of a stranger, dependent upon common charity for bread. Was it not so?—And she plunged into the deep, dark waters to hide her shame," cried Lord Avonmore, in a more hurried voice, now completely mastered by his feelings, "and she left no record, no sign, behind her, save that in the dead of that night she stood, her garments streaming with the water, her long hair floating round her in the moonbeam, at the foot of the bed of that miserable man, and——"

"Was this her hair? Were these—these things—these lockets, hers?" cried Gideon, in excessive agitation, tearing open his bosom, and from round his neck rending off the black riband upon which they still hung, and putting them into his hand.

"My son!—my son!—my son!"

And, like David upon the neck of Absolom, he would have fallen and wept; but the young man drew back gravely.

"Sir! I am the son of my mother!"

Lord Avonmore stood there arrested; his arms stretched out—as if to embrace his son—extended in the empty air. Then he let them fall,

retreated to his chair, and covered his face with one hand.

Gideon stood still where he had started back, and did not attempt to resume his place. He waited with a deeply serious air till his father should speak again.

At last Lord Avonmore lifted up his head, and gazed at him earnestly.

"So like," he muttered, then he said,—

"The son of Miriam cannot forgive?"

"His own injuries, yes!—hers, *never!*"

Oh, how beautiful, how glorious, did this young creature, in his holy anger, appear before his father's eyes! "So looked the cherub in his grave rebuking." Oh, how did he yearn, long, to clasp that proud, that pure, that lofty being to his bosom, and bless him, and call him son!—son!—son! But he stood abashed—the great, the daring, the powerful, stood abashed.

He read in those stern, but pure and lucid eyes, beaming bright with truth and honour, in all the grave determination of that noble face, what virtue thought of vice—what purity of profligacy—what honour of treachery, and his heart sank within him—turning away his head again, he fell back into his chair.

Some moments were given to all the bitterness of remorse—the next belonged to pride.

A man so bad as Ridley had been is too often incapable of that remorse which leads to repentance. His heart is too hard to melt to repentance, the humbleness, the softness of repentance is become impossible to the great Satan; he cannot repent, but he can take refuge in the loftiness of his pride.

Such are the passages of life fabled by the old allegory.

The choice was there again—remorse to repentance—remorse to pride. He chose the last.

After collecting his scattered spirits as well as he could, he lifted up his head, and addressing his son in a tone quite unlike that of the broken emotion of a quarter of an hour before, he said, taking up the tokens which lay upon the table,—

"Young man, this leaves not the shadow of a doubt upon my mind. These little relics were found upon you, an infant?"

Gideon made an affirmative sign.

"And this hair——"

But here nature was too strong, even for him. As he unrolled the silken lock and passed it slowly through his fingers, he uttered a low groan.

But Gideon heard it not; he stepped hastily forward and made a gesture as if to resume the lock of hair—as if he felt it to be profaned by th

hand which now touched it—his father seemed to understand him.

"What do you mean?" said he angrily, grasping it firmly; "this belongs to me."

"No," said his son, "it belongs to *me*—give it me back, sir, if you please—it is very sacred in my eyes—Mother!—mother!" he cried, somewhat wildly; "Mother!—mother! look at your poor son!—give it me back, sir, I beseech you—give it me back, it is all I have of her."

"Take it;" and he gave it him back with the two lockets.

"Keep those, if you please, sir," said Gideon; "I have no further use for them; thank you."

Receiving the hair and then turning away.

"And where do you mean to go? What do you mean to do?"

"To go back whence I came."

"Truly," said Lord Avonmore, again his pride coming to his assistance; "this conduct to a man—really, very anxious to be of use to you—to the man who is prepared to own himself your father—who *is* your father, young man—is to say the least of it, unbecoming—and from a son—unnatural."

"I have no father."

"What do you mean? you have found one in me."

"Was this ring," cried Gideon, suddenly returning to the table and seizing the black riband to which the ring and lockets hung,—"was this ring a wedding-ring, or was it intended for a wedding-ring? Was my mother a wife, or was she only a wretched, deluded, miserable victim?"

Lord Avonmore answered not; he could not just then speak.

"Tell me! tell me!" Gideon passionately went on; "only tell me that when you married her, it was in good faith, though afterwards you forsook her—that she was the victim of inconstancy and not of premeditated deceit—and all—all shall be forgotten and forgiven."

"Forgotten! forgiven!" cried Lord Avonmore, rising hastily from his seat, stung by these words, as it would seem, to a strange rage and still stranger suspicion. "What do you mean by saying that, sir, to *me?*—No, sir, your mother never was married, you have no legal claim of any description upon me—and you tax my forbearance and kindness too far. Are you to beard me to my face? miserable offspring of vice and frailty!—Me! of all men—me!—and at the very moment when I offer to do, what not one man in ten thousand would think of doing—acknowledge you for my son—declare my weakness to the world, and elevate you to share

the honours to which you have never contributed. Forgotten!—forgiven!—good heavens alive!"

And rising from his chair, he walked up and down the room in a transport of rage, disappointment, and despair.

Gideon stood there, leaning upon the back of a chair; still looking steadily at him, still mastering, as it were, with his eye, the man of whom the whole world stood in awe. The last speech, which he thought of the most unparalleled and execrable injustice—reproaching him for the very meanness of that birth, the consequence of his father's own wickedness—completed his feelings of indignant disdain.

He watched the miserable man thus pacing the room in a paroxysm of helpless rage and ungovernable pride; and then, folding up the lock of hair which he still held in his hand, returned it to the small case in which it was deposited, and replaced it in his bosom. Then he again seemed about to leave the room.

"Don't go!" said Lord Avonmore, stopping, and turning round.

"Why should I stay?" replied his son; "I have heard all I came to learn."

"What is that?" cried Lord Avonmore, suddenly advancing, and laying his hand upon his arm.

"Nothing — nothing."

"You have then some feeling, proud and insolent as you look?" said the father, again. "It *has* agitated you, disguise it as you will. Blood will make itself felt. See! it is there!" pointing to the lip against which the handkerchief was now pressed.

"Yes," said Gideon, "I have had it before; it comes on when I am much agitated. It is of no consequence."

"Well, well, all *is*, as you say, of no consequence. I had hoped to have found a son—for though with two sons I am worse than childless —but instead of the duty of a son, what do I find from you all? Heartless ingratitude from one, heartless indifference from another, heartless recrimination from all three of you! And yet," looking up at him, "I——" and melting once more to irrepressible tenderness, he stretched out his arms again, and said, "Child of Miriam!—my son!—my son!"

"Sir, answer me once more—I mistook you—it could not be! This ring—you did not betray her by a pretended marriage? In a moment of weakness, say, you took advantage of my poor mother's frailty—only say that, and all shall be forgotten."

His agitation was increasing; he felt himself

growing very ill; he began to feel for his father —he could not help it. His indignant assertions of his mother's wrongs, his righteous indignation at her destroyer, were giving way before the pathos, every now and then, of Lord Avonmore's manner—the more touching from the contrast with his usual coldness and haughtiness.

"Oh, only say that — only say that — and all, all shall be forgiven!"

Again the word aroused his pride, and his feelings of tenderness began to diminish. To be questioned, that was insupportable; to see the deceit he had practised regarded with such scorn, such abhorrence, as the very earnestness of his son's anxiety for his exculpation expressed, was too galling.

"I am not accustomed to be thus put to the question," he said, "and I ask the forgiveness of no one. The *word*, even from you, is an insult. I am the author of your birth, and *that* you may well esteem in itself a heavy injury in such a world as this. All the compensation I can offer, I do.—As for the pretence of a marriage, it *was* a pretence, but your mother believed herself married. I acknowledge that.—But if you mean to build any claim upon this, or to disturb my relations with my present wife, or to brand my character by bringing up a forgotten affair of my

youth, and publishing the errors of days long gone by to that world in which I stand exposed as upon a pedestal — I tell you at once I will not allow it. I offer you the place of private secretary, and to acknowledge you as my illegitimate son. Even to be the *illegitimate* son of one like me I can tell you, young man, is no mean inheritance. I will also provide for you by my will. I do not think such offers as these exactly deserve to be met with *forgiveness!* Men in your position rather esteem it as a cause for gratitude when fathers can be found ready thus to acknowledge and befriend them. Such cases are not so very common—as you, perhaps, when you have a little more experience of the world, will find."

Again, the base influences of insolence and pride suggested this harsh speech on the part of the father.

Again, a generous, disinterested indignation dictated the son's reply.

" If such justice is rare, so much the worse. I thank you, my lord, at least for having offered it to me. I would rather remain as I am.—To be the offspring of frailty, were it the frailty of an emperor, can affix honour to no man. Vice, be it the vice of the loftiest being upon earth, can shed no lustre upon another. Such as it has left me—such will I remain. I ask nothing from

you, and I will accept nothing from you. To her who has been the friend of my helplessness I will return, and I will earn the bread I eat. ..... Sir, I forgive you from my heart for what you have done to me — forgive me on your side if I have disappointed you. When we are both upon our death-beds, it will be better we have exchanged forgiveness."

And again pressing his handkerchief to his mouth Gideon left the room.

He died at Mordaunt Hall.

When the final sentence is signed, we begin to understand the full value of that which we are about to lose.

Mr. Chandos was kind and compassionate at last, and he let Celia go to assist Calantha in nursing him.

For this she was very grateful.

They used to sit for hours together holding each other's hands, as he reclined upon a couch before the window; and she sat on a low stool by his side, watching the soft summer wind as it swept in low murmurs over the trees, or the many-coloured evening clouds in the gardens of the west.

They were not without hope or without consolation, though for this world there was nothing but a grave before them.

"I thank you," he said one day to Mr. Prior, "for all you have done for me, and most of all, that you have made me a Christian — that you have taught me, may I call it, that homely, human religion, which the Son of God, humbling himself in the flesh, has brought to the hearth and the bosom of every man. He shewed Himself, not in His glory, as the inscrutable Son of the everlasting Father of the universe, but as the friend and companion of men, and as possessing, in one sense, a human heart. He has taught me that human affections are sacred and divine, and partake of the infinite; and this affection, which is not my life — for I am about to die — but myself — shall not be obliterated in that other world — for Christ in the flesh has wept for the sorrows of His friends. . . . . I shall meet you all again — I feel I shall. . . . . It is young to die, but you have taught me that to die is but to awaken to a better life — and the will of God be done."

He was buried near the spot where Calantha was afterwards laid.

And tears, as if he had indeed been a child of the house, rained over the foundling's grave.

There is a stone laid over it — it contains only one name — "GIDEON."

It was some years afterwards that the great and accomplished statesman, George Ridley, Earl of Avonmore, died by his own hand.

Celia was too good not to find peace even in this life.

THE END.

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